

**A GUIDE TO THE ANTIQUITIES  
OF THE STONE AGE IN THE  
DEPARTMENT OF BRITISH AND  
MEDIÆVAL ANTIQUITIES**

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A Guide to the Antiquities of the Stone Age in the Department of British and Mediæval  
Antiquities by Various

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**VARIOUS**

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PLATE I. CARVED DAGGER-HANDLES OF THE PALAEO-LITHIC PERIOD.  
(Case 114, see p. 49.)

✓  
BRITISH MUSEUM.

A GUIDE

TO THE ANTIQUITIES OF

THE STONE AGE

IN THE DEPARTMENT OF

*British Museum,*

BRITISH AND MEDÆVAL ANTIQUITIES, *Dept. of*

WITH TEN PLATES AND 142 ILLUSTRATIONS.

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LONDON

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## P R E F A C E.

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THIS brief Guide to the collections representing the stage of culture known as the Stone Age has in many ways proved more difficult to prepare than a work of larger compass. The evidence is often so largely inductive, and for the earlier or Palaeolithic period depends to so great an extent upon geological data, that it is impossible in so short a space to do more than suggest the difficulties which surround many of the lesser questions.

Two circumstances combine to render incomplete both the Guide and the collections which it describes. In the first place, many objects essential to a full understanding of these early periods are at the Natural History Branch, Cromwell Road; secondly, the collection here exhibited is very unequal. The Scottish, Russian, and German sections are by no means adequate, while some localities and some classes of implements from England and Wales are not so well represented as they should be in the National Collection.

The convenient term Stone Age has been used throughout because it is commonly accepted and universally understood; but it must be held to denote a stage of human culture rather than a division in time. As civilization advanced, other materials came by degrees into general use without immediately supplanting the old. It is therefore possible that certain implements noticed in the present Guide were made after the discovery of bronze; on the other hand, objects from the round barrows which are usually ascribed to a people acquainted with metal have not been included, though very similar types may be observed in the neolithic section of the gallery. It is felt that the contents of round barrows would be more properly included in a separate Guide to the Antiquities of the Bronze Period.

A very large proportion of the collection is due to the enlightened liberality of Mr. Henry Christy, who, up to the time of his death in 1865, spent much of his leisure in forming an ethnographical collection, in illustration of which he acquired an extensive series of prehistoric stone implements, the whole being eventually given to the British Museum. His most



important work in connection with prehistoric archaeology was the exploration of the bone-caves of Dordogne, where he discovered, in conjunction with Monsieur Edouard Lartet, the wonderful drawings and carvings of the Cave period. A sense of international justice led him to desire that the finest pieces from these discoveries should be returned to France; hence, a number of carvings, as well as the engraving of a mammoth, perhaps the best example of palaeolithic art, are only represented in his own collection by plaster casts. A portrait bust of Mr. Christy stands at the foot of the spiral staircase leading from the Stone Age Gallery.

For a few of the illustrations the Trustees of the British Museum have to thank Mr. Worthington G. Smith, in whose work on primeval man figs. 2, 3, 4, 9, 11-14, and 141 have been published: and the Society of Antiquaries of London for figs. 87, 112, 136-140, and 142. Nearly all the other drawings, as well as the plates, have been specially prepared for this Guide, and comprise a large number of objects that have not been hitherto published.

It may be added that where the illustrations are not full size, the amount of reduction is indicated by a fraction; thus,  $\frac{1}{2}$  means that the original has twice the length and breadth, but four times the area, of the reproduction.

CHARLES H. READ.

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THE antiquities of the Stone Age from this and other countries are arranged as far as possible in chronological order, beginning with the palaeolithic series in Wall-Case 99, which is reached by the western spiral staircase, on the left of the opening into the Prehistoric Room. At the foot of this staircase is a map of England and Wales, marked to show the sites of bone-caves and palaeolithic discoveries; while at the top of the stairs a relief map of the Thames Valley near London shows the extent of the ancient river-bed, now occupied by gravels and brick-earth, and the southern limit, at Finchley, of the Boulder clay (coloured blue).

Specimens of worked flint, showing the peculiarities by which human work in this material can be distinguished from flints chipped or fractured by natural agencies, are exhibited in a section of Table-Case B (see p. 115) on the floor of this room, and may be usefully studied before an inspection of the flint implements exhibited upstairs. For the block of breccia in Table-Case T between the spiral staircases, see pp. 35, 42.

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