# Animal, Vegetable or Mineral? Identifying tool use in British Mesolithic woodworking

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**Résumé**

The British Mesolithic archaeological record has suffered from a comparative scarcity of wooden artefacts. Finds in the last decade from sites such as Goldcliff, Star Carr and Bouldnor Cliff are presenting new opportunities to study this missing aspect of Mesolithic material culture. The 2017 identification of the first Mesolithic fish-trap structures found in Britain at the late Mesolithic site of Goldcliff East, Wales (Bell *et al.* 2020, forthcoming), has led to the identification of atypical toolmarks on pointed stakes with characteristics previously unknown in the British Mesolithic record. On-going PhD research is focused on understanding the extent of this evidence in the archaeological record as well as the manufacturing process and tools used to shape these artefacts.
Comparative toolmark analysis on wooden pointed end assemblages from Mesolithic Goldcliff East (Newport, UK), early Neolithic trackways of the Sweet Track (Somerset, UK) and unpublished Walpole Landfill site (Somerset, UK) has suggested the presence and use of a distinctive non-lithic tool type and working method that appears to span the cultural divide between the late Mesolithic and early Neolithic communities. Given current aDNA debates about the Mesolithic to Neolithic transition in this area of northern Europe understanding the complexities and similarities in prehistoric woodworking presents a useful mechanism to assess the technological variability and change between disparate prehistoric cultural groups.

References:
Bell, M. et al. (2020) Mesolithic Pathways, Fishtraps and recording of intertidal archaeology at Goldcliff, Wales, 2006-2019 (forthcoming).

**Mots-Clés:** woodworking, tool, function, experimental archaeology, wetland edge

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