

## **Grant no. 3/2014**

Dating animal bones from Brimble Pit Swallet, Mendip Hills, Somerset  
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Following a successful application to the Maltwood Fund, six radiocarbon dates have been obtained on animal bones from Brimble Pit Swallet, Westbury-sub-Mendip. Excavations were undertaken in the 1990s by the late Dr William Stanton, who was clearing the solution hollow of recent debris. During this work he encountered human remains, lithics, 5000 year old pottery, wild and domesticated butchered animal bones and (from an adjacent shaft in the same swallet) an unusual stone axehead.

As part of the author's research into the use of swallets for special deposition during prehistory, two dates were previously obtained for material from the site, suggesting mid-late 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC activity. The new radiocarbon dates allow us to consider whether the material was placed as a single event or whether multiple stages can be identified.

The new dates are on bones from different locations in the swallet and reveal the material near the base dates to the early 5<sup>th</sup> millennium BC and those higher up to the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC. The latter dates are in accordance with those previously acquired and indicate at least two stages of deposition at the site. The Mesolithic animal bones may have been washed in/disposed of at the swallet but the main phase of activity dates to the Late Neolithic, when large quantities of animal bones, together with pottery and flints, were deposited. This material may have been derived from a midden and probably represents a single episode of deposition. The human remains may be contemporary with, or slightly later than, this activity.