

# I. General information

## 1. Introduction

The 'tunnel excavation' of the prehistoric flint mines at Rijckholt-St. Geertruid (1964-1972) was to be the first in a series of studies of such mines in Europe. The three flint symposiums at Maastricht in particular, as organised by Working Group members, who also participated in the excavation, have contributed much to this development. Following upon the excavations in Rijckholt-St. Geertruid, this Working Group also excavated flint mines at Grimes Graves (P.J. FELDER 1977; SIEVEKING 1979; LONGWORTH & VARNDILL 1996).

In view of the fact that the excavations were carried out and the flint symposiums organised outside official working hours the participants spent much of their own time. This in part explains why the present paper took so long to complete. Other reasons include the lack of knowledge of underground flint mining, which, however, progressed during the excavation. At any rate, this lack of knowledge made it clear that some matters had to be examined in great detail before they could be written up. The study of the many hafted flint picks found (Reports 24 and 25) may serve as an example. As it turned out, these studies did not yield unequivocal results.

Beside the problems we faced during preparation of the present paper, there were difficulties of a geological nature, despite the fact that a number of participants specialised in geology. Not until 1979 could the flint layer exploited at Rijckholt-St. Geertruid be identified as layer 10 of the Lanaye Chalk Member (Gulpen Formation).

Over the years, however, a large number of reports have been written on the excavation. Therefore, it was decided to combine all these reports into a single, extensive paper and publish it in some form or other. Only then could we start with the preparation of the present volume.

The basic data on flint extraction and working at the Rijckholt mines are summarised in Chapter X.

## 2. Excavation reports

### Rijckholt-St. Geertruid 1964-1972

Results and data are recorded in the '*Rapportage Opgraving Rijckholt-St. Geertruid 1964-1972*'. This report comprises 39 interim reports which on December 7, 1993, were transferred together with all finds, original registration forms, drawings etc., to the Rijckholt Committee of the Council for Cultural Management.

The reports, and all associated artefacts, are lodged with the Provincial Depot for Archaeological Finds (Provinciaal Depot voor Bodemvondsten) at Maastricht.

References made in the present volume to Report (number) refer to the various interim reports.

Specification of interim reports:

- 01: permits and concessions
- 02: maps of the examined portion of the prehistoric flint mines
- 03: methods employed in preparation of the computerised version of the excavation area
- 04: map of the first galleries encountered
- 05: the Rijckholt 1 skull
- 06: three voids
- 07: molluscs in fill of shaft 15
- 08: archaeological-biological studies at Savelsbos
- 09: snails from shaft 15 (excursion report)
- 10: skeletal remains of mammals from shafts
- 11: vertebrate skeletal remains
- 12: faunal remains encountered in shafts
- 13: survey of areas of Rijckholt flint mines
- 14: announcements and proceedings of meetings of the Working Group
- 15: Working Group correspondence
- 16: C14 dating
- 17: Prof. Dr. A.E. van Giffen's visit
- 18: publications in newspapers and weeklies on the Rijckholt excavations
- 19: historical account
- 20: survey of activities, part 1: 1964-1967
- 21: survey of activities, part 2: 1968-1972
- 22: clearing and preservation of the Rijckholt-St. Geertruid mines
- 23: registration forms for finds and find contexts
- 24: measurements of finds
- 25: analysis of finds
- 26: photographs and slides
- 27: finds from mine 55



Fig. 1 Working Group members during a lunchbreak (the so-called *botteren*) around the stove; from left to right: Werner M. Felder, P.C.M. (Cor) Rademakers, Cees Roos, P.J. (Sjeuf) Felder, Gerrit M.J. Rademakers, Jan P.M.T. Meessen, Harry L.M. Jonkergouw, Frans H.G. Engelen and G.W. (Sjir) Hensgens.

28: survey of shafts based on Autocad maps

29: registration of finds 3766 to 6264

30: methods of plotting employed during excavation

31: tool marks in the galleries

32: survey of molluscs

33: artefacts and working methods used by the prehistoric miners at Rijckholt

34: letter to Louwe Kooymans about 'Playing with numbers' (= *Spel met getallen*)

35: flint studies in southern Limburg

36: hammerstones from the flint mines

37: annual reports 1965 to 1971

38: drafts for the full publication on the excavations of the Rijckholt-St. Geertruid flint mines

39: list of papers on prehistoric flint workshops in southern Limburg and contiguous areas

### 3. Members of the Prehistoric Flint Mines Working Group

During the 1964-1972 excavation campaign, the following people were members of the Working Group for the entire period or parts thereof. At the beginning of excavations, a photograph was taken of some of the members (Fig. 1).

Bless, M.J.M.  
Bosch, P.W.  
Bremen, J.  
Dodemont, L.  
Engelen, F.H.G.  
Engelen, F.H.M.  
Felder, P.J.  
Felder, W.M.  
Geel, E.A. van  
Goossens, C.  
Hensgens, G.W.  
Hermens, J.A.  
Horbach, A.J.A.B.G.  
Janssens, H.J.  
Jonkergouw, H.L.M.  
Kessels, A.L.M.  
Knol, J.  
Koning, H. de  
Kraaijenhagen, F.C.  
Lardinois, L.G.J.  
Meessen, J.P.M.T.  
Neumann, A.  
Nillesen, J.H.M.  
Orbons, P.M.  
Rademakers, G.H.J.  
Rademakers, P.C.M.  
Rensma, J.  
Roebroeks, W.  
Roos, C.  
Roos, N.  
Ruys v. Duchteren, J.H.  
Simons, J.  
Schijven, C.J.  
Vegte, G. van der  
Willems, J.H.

Members' addresses at the time and the period during which they were active are listed in Report 37.

### 4. Survey of donors

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