

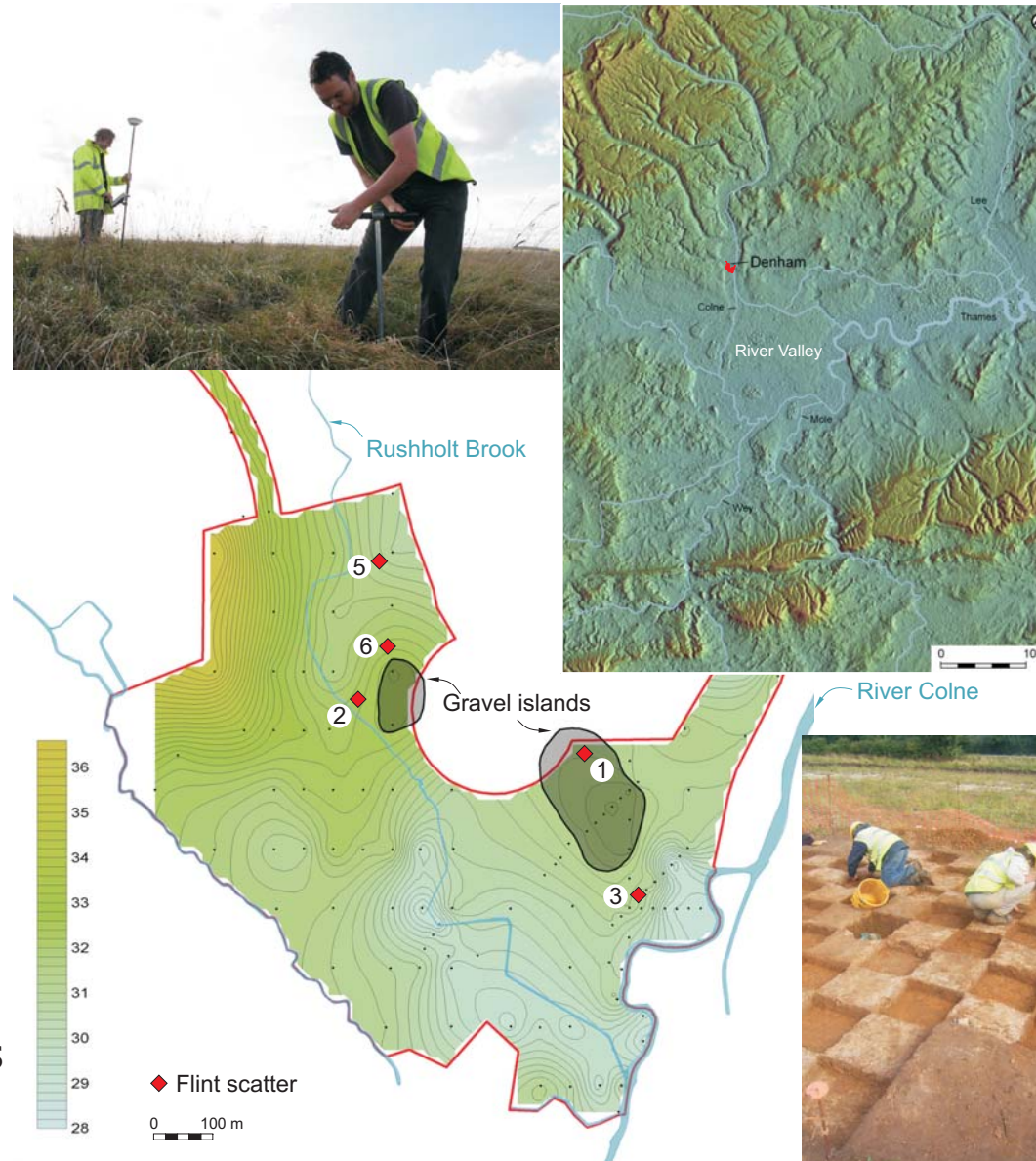
Stone Age hunters at Denham

At the end of the Ice Age, 10,000 years ago, people lived by hunting and gathering food. Work at Denham has provided important evidence for this distant past.

In the warmer climate the Colne valley supported many different habitats. For hunters and gatherers they yielded a plentiful supply of wild foods such as fish and fowl, deer, fruits, and nuts.

People lived in tents, moving from one camp site to another. Each site was on an island of higher ground in the floodplain. People returned to them every year for generations.

Over time the islands were buried by silts laid down by the river. Archaeologists set out to map this lost landscape using augers to create a contour map. Small test pits were dug to find the flint tools left by the Stone Age people.



Two gravel islands were found. Scatters of flint tools around their edge show there had been camp sites there.

Between the islands are old river courses that had filled up with peat. This peat contains pollen as old as the camp sites. Study of the minute pollen grains will allow us to paint a picture of the buried landscape.

As Stone Age camp sites like Denham are rare, Summerleaze changed their plans to make sure the sites were preserved. The wetness of the peat is being monitored to ensure that the pollen also survives.

