

NEWS RELEASE – 19 July 2024

## Swindon's Mammoth graveyard yields more palaeontological wonders

The Hills Quarry Products site north of Swindon, which inspired the BBC1 documentary 'Attenborough and the Mammoth Graveyard' is once again yielding palaeontological wonders.

The dig led by passionate amateur palaeontologists, Sally and Dr Neville Hollingworth, began on Monday the 15<sup>th</sup> of July and the list of amazing discoveries over the first few days has included: a Neanderthal Hand Axe, Mammoth Tooth, Rib, Pelvic bone and Skull fragments – plus a Nautilus and even a Shark tooth. Over 100 student volunteers from 18 Universities and experts from the wider Palaeontological world will be assisting with the dig until it closes on August the 5<sup>th</sup>.

Project lead Sally Hollingworth commented: *"We are so excited to be back on the site which has previously yielded remains of at least five Ice Age Mammoths and a number of stone tools made by Neanderthals. From day one of this dig we've already made some amazing discoveries. Who knows what we might find for the rest of the dig!"*

*"We've been overwhelmed with the enthusiasm and hard work the small army of unpaid volunteers has shown, plus the exceptional support from Hills Quarry Products, who have facilitated and supported this and the two previous digs. The site is not open to members of the public - but look out for updates on the dig via social media using our hashtag [#TuskForce](#)."*



Sally Hollingworth, Dr Stephen Zhang – University of Bristol and Dr Neville Hollingworth celebrate the discovery of a Mammoth tooth.

The artefacts and mammoth remains found at the Hills Quarry Products' quarry date to around 210,000 – 220,000 years ago, towards the end of a warmer interglacial period when Britain was still occupied by Neanderthals. Towards the end of this period, early humans abandoned Britain as temperatures plummeted and the landmass was plunged back under ice.

It's not yet clear whether the mammoths were killed by Neanderthals, or why so many were found in one place, but archaeological sites from this period are incredibly rare, as is evidence of how Neanderthals interacted with mammoths, making this discovery one that has enormous value for understanding of Neanderthal behaviour, not just in Britain but across Europe.



A Mammoth tooth discovered at the Hills Quarry Products' quarry at Cerney Wick



The team of volunteers and Palaeontology experts led by Sally Hollingworth and Dr Neville Hollingworth prepare for another day of digs and discoveries at Cerney Wick Quarry north of Swindon.

## ENDS

**Hills Quarry Products** specialises in the production and supply of quarry products and ready-mixed concrete to the construction and agricultural sectors. It is a dynamic regional business which, while centred on Wiltshire, has stretched its boundaries into neighbouring areas to become one of the region's largest suppliers. Hills Quarry Products is a wholly owned subsidiary of The Hills Group Limited, a privately owned family company established in 1900. [www.hills-quarry.co.uk](http://www.hills-quarry.co.uk)





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