

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN
SOCIETY

(INCORPORATING THE CAMBS & HUNTS
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY)



VOLUME LXVIII

1978

IMRAY LAURIE NORIE AND WILSON

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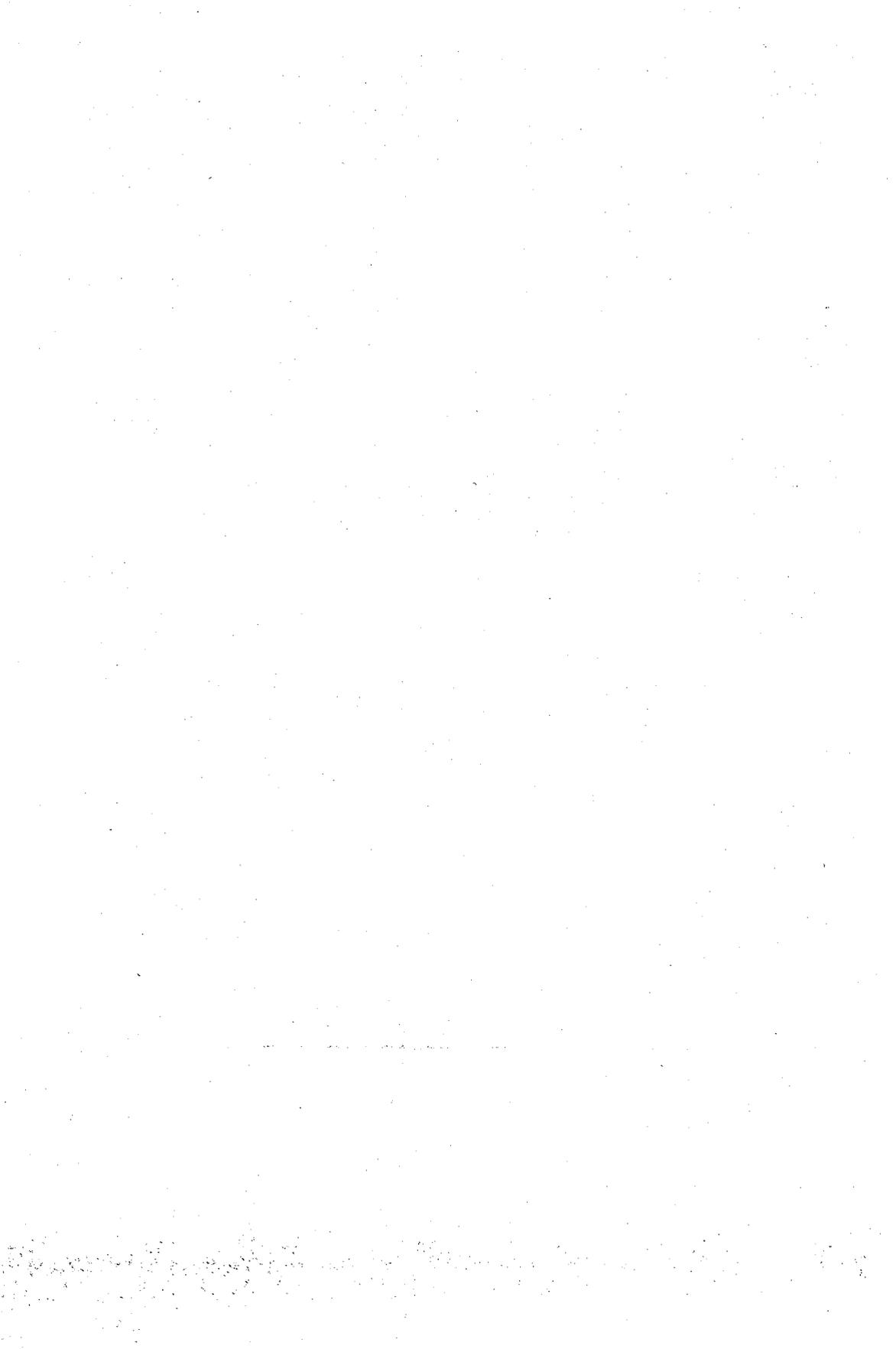
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THE CAMBRIDGE ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD GROUP FIRST REPORT

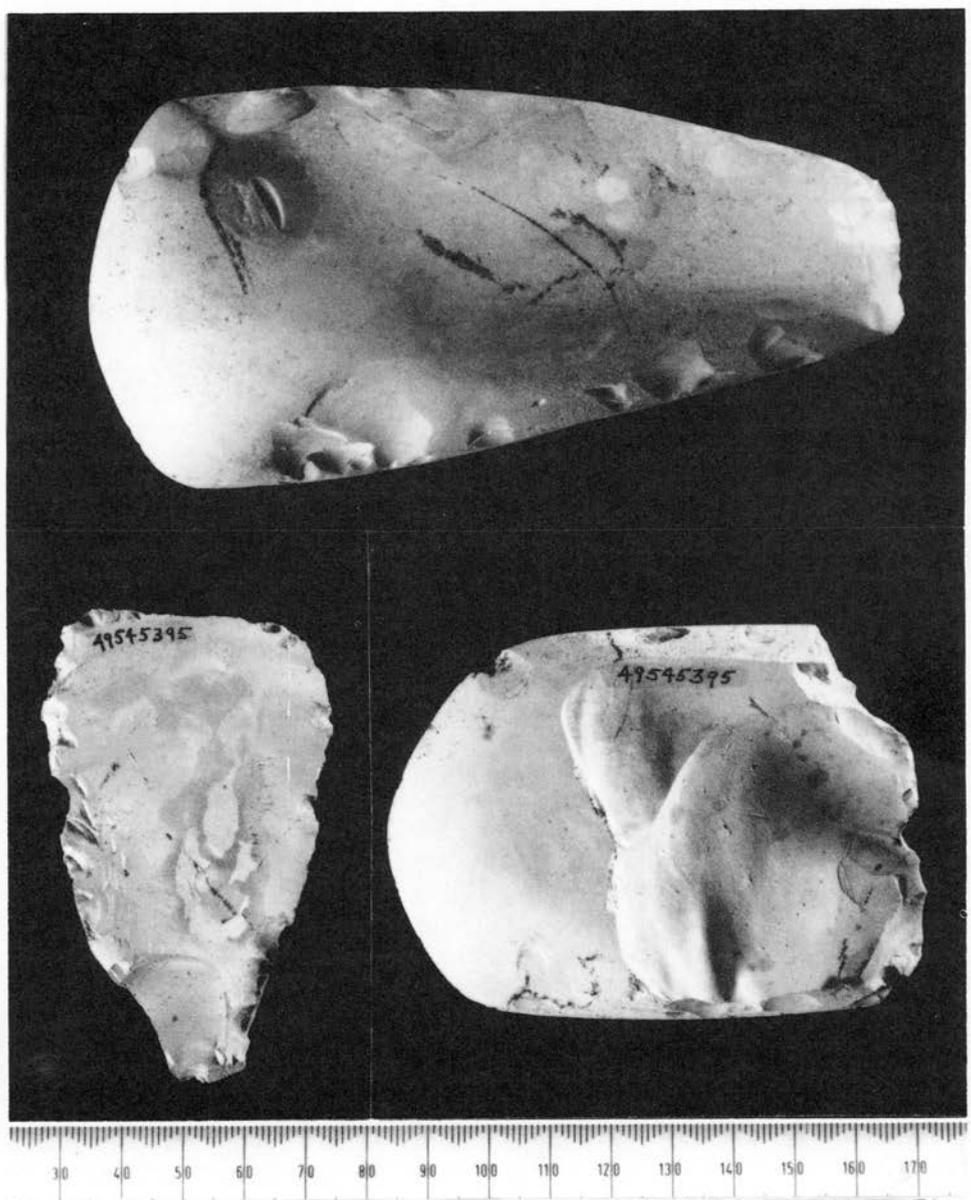
Crop-mark sites discovered mainly by the Cambridge University Aerial Photography Department have revealed the intensive nature of habitation along the Granta Valley. The patterns of most of these crop-marks suggest that they are likely to belong to the Iron Age or Roman periods, but without further evidence it is not possible to rule out earlier periods, to differentiate Iron Age from Roman communities or to assess the continuity between phases. Iron Age settlement in this area has particular interest because of the presence (and partial excavation) of forts at Wandlebury and Cherry Hinton (War Ditches) and the results of other excavations such as the emergency work on the site of New Addenbrooke's Hospital and the past three seasons' work at Shelford on one of these typical crop-mark sites. Chance finds of this period are rare, but include the fire-dogs from Lords Bridge, Barton and the rich burial from Newnham Croft, both of which are on show in the Archaeology and Ethnology Museum.

The problems posed by crop-marks and by settlement patterns in the Iron Age therefore seem to come together in the Granta Valley, and it was thought that answers to both might be obtained by systematic and intensive field-walking which ought to produce a reliable spread of dating evidence.

Many people, most already attending evening classes on archaeology, had expressed a desire to be actively involved in local archaeology, and so a programme was drawn up which would combine practical training with an increase in our knowledge regarding the problems outlined above. Forty people have already participated in the project, of whom fourteen are regular and now skilled attenders. The method adopted is to divide the fields into 100 metre squares based on the National Grid and to collect finds from each square separately. The finds are briefly examined on the field and those that are retained are washed, marked with a 6-figure grid reference by volunteers and returned to the Cambridgeshire Archaeological Centre (89 Castle Street). They are re-examined, plotted on a large-scale map of the field and the results are entered on standard sheets and sites and monuments record cards. It is hoped that this systematic procedure will produce more reliable information than the *ad hoc* field walking which is usually undertaken.

Some preliminary results that can already be noted (April 1978) are as follows:-
TL 457538 (Great Shelford: owner, Mr. D. Webster)

An aerial photograph by Cambridge University Aerial Photography Department revealed a site here that was interpreted as an Iron Age and Roman Settlement. The Roman date was confirmed, with most finds, which were concentrated on the edge of the crop-mark, belonging to the first to fourth centuries AD, but no definite Iron Age pottery. An adjacent field, TL 461536, which showed no crop-marks, had produced a



PL. I. Neolithic flint axes from field north of Wandlebury, Gogmagog Hills.

neolithic polished flint axe and this early prehistoric occupation was confirmed by the discovery of many worked and waste flints, including two round scrapers. Both these fields had been partially sown and so they could not be completely walked until the following year. Documentary evidence, which has already shown that these were part of the common fields of Great Shelford until enclosure in 1835, is being further investigated by members of the group.

TL 452 555 (Trumpington: owner, Sir Francis Pemberton)

Two fields by Long Road containing a number of irregular crop-marks. Field walking showed that the sites had been very disturbed and the marks were the result of searchlight installations during the Second World War. A few worked flints indicated some earlier activity on the field but were too few to give definite information.

TL 496 530 (Stapleford: owner, Mr. R. P. Bush)

Aerial photographs showed a series of linear marks on the field but only clusters of eighteenth and nineteenth century sherds were found, in spite of the proximity of Wandlebury hill-fort.

TL 496 536 (as above).

This field was next to Wandlebury and showed occasional linear crop-marks. Only three sherds of Iron age pottery and some worked flints were found.

TL 497 540 (as above).

There were only slight linear marks visible in this field, and the finds are all likely to belong to the neolithic period. They include one complete polished flint axe and part of a broken one, and a series of worked flints including scrapers (Pl. 1). There was also a polished hone that has not been dated.

TL 486 536 (Stapleford: owner, Mr. C. Bradford)

There were no crop-marks on this field, which produced much eighteenth and nineteenth century pottery, part of another polished axe and a scatter of worked flints.

The most exciting and interesting finds occurred in the immediate vicinity of Wandlebury, and it is felt that these alone have justified much of the effort put into the project by members of the group.

Our thanks go to all the farmers concerned for their help and co-operation in this venture, without which none of these results would be possible.

Future activities

Field-walking will begin again in the autumn, and meanwhile there will be a programme of evening meetings for talks, discussions and finds processing. Practical work in the summer includes assisting the University Field Units to record the graveyard at St Andrews, Chesterton, starting a moated sites survey and comparing documentary evidence and a species count in the hedgerows around Wandlebury.

If you are interested in joining similar activities, please contact Miss Alison Taylor at Shire Hall (Cambridge 58811) or Mrs. L. J. Bradford (Cambridge 45796) for further information.

L.J. Bradford



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