

# SOME PALÆOLITHS FROM THE FARNHAM TERRACE GRAVELS

BY

W. F. RANKINE, F.S.A.Scot.

## INTRODUCTION

THE object of this contribution is to record some important palæolithic data which have become available for study since the publication of the Society's Farnham volume,<sup>1</sup> which contained a comprehensive study of the Farnham gravel terraces and their contained artifacts.<sup>2</sup>

Chief among these supplementary data now being described are two private collections of palæoliths of considerable importance, in that the implements were recovered under supervised digging and that the owners of the collections had acquired a good knowledge of palæolithic types under the guidance of Mr. Henry Bury, the pioneer of research on the terraces, and the late Reginald A. Smith, who was greatly interested in the subject. One of these collections was built up by Mr. Harold Falkner, of Farnham, and the bulk of his material was recovered from his own gravel pit under continuous supervision. The majority of these implements carry some data. The other collection was made by the late Mr. Charles Borelli, also of Farnham, who for many years was a member of our Society. Here again the bulk of the assemblage derived from the collector's own gravel pit where the digging progressed under Mr. Borelli's personal supervision.

## FALKNER COLLECTION

This principally comprises some seventy palæoliths which were recovered from a pit, covering approximately 1 acre, south of Great Austins Road and immediately west of Mavins Road off the Tilford Road: National Grid reference, 41/847458. A large area in this district was cleared of gravel about forty years ago and is referred to generally as Great Austins Pit (see *Preh. Farnh.*, p. 53). The site is now built over. The pit from which the implements came was dug into the junction of Terraces A and B at 330.O.D., and the digging was spread over some thirteen years from 1912 to 1925. Two diggers were employed regularly by Mr. Falkner who recorded each find with date and, where ascertainable, depth data. Thus

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<sup>1</sup> *A Survey of the Prehistory of the Farnham District* (1936), hereafter referred to as *Preh. Farnh.*

<sup>2</sup> "Geology and Palæolithic Studies," by Dr. Kenneth Oakley, *Preh. Farnh.*, pp. 3-58.

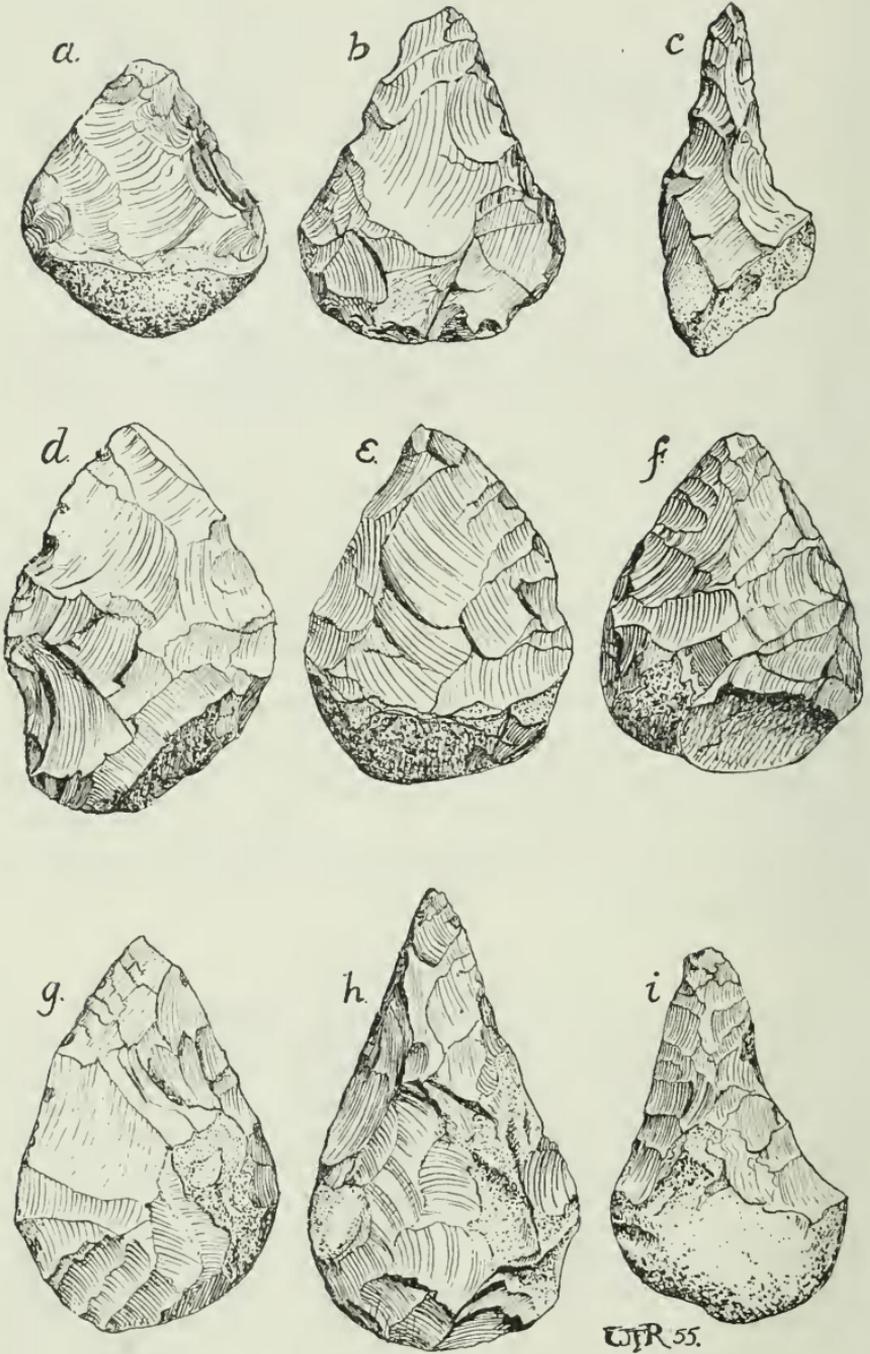


FIG. 1.—ACHEULIAN HAND-AXES FROM TERRACES A AND B.  
FALKNER COLLECTION. See text. Half-size.

this collection may reasonably be regarded as deriving from the recorded provenance. It was not possible to differentiate between the terraces but it is known from the owner's digging plan that excavations during the period 1911 to 1914 were confined to the north edge of the pit, that is in Terrace B.

An analysis of the implement assemblage is noteworthy. Implement types consist of ovates, cordates, pyriforms, a few shouldered ficrons and one cleaver. They range through Middle to Upper Acheulian. As regards the condition of the artifacts the majority are sharp and ochreous in colour. A few flakes are preserved which is very unusual in collections made thirty or more years ago since flakes had no market value and, consequently, were seldom retained by the gravel diggers.

*Analysis of the Collection:* Of the 70 implements 5 are "rolled" or derived from Terrace A; of the remaining 65 specimens 8 are fragmentary and 8 are flakes apparently Acheulian in character. Of the other 49 implements 27 are ovates, 5 are pyriforms and 4 are shouldered ficrons, 12 are small cordates and there is 1 cleaver. Out of the 49 palæoliths 32 are less than 4 inches in length. Only 1 of the 27 ovates shows the S-twist. Outstanding types are illustrated in Figs. 1 and 2.

*Descriptions of Figs. 1 and 2:*

- 1, a: Small cordate, late-Middle Acheulian.  $2\frac{1}{2}'' \times 2\frac{1}{4}'' \times 1''$ . Colour, yellowish-brown, good flint with few inclusions. Shallow flaking with one edge carefully worked (right in figure). Thick porous cortex envelops the butt suggesting a pebble tool. Found 1913. Terrace B (?). Cf. with *Preh. Farnh.*, p. 49, Fig. 24.
- b: Small pyriform hand-axe. Late-Middle or Upper Acheulian.  $3\frac{1}{8}'' \times 2\frac{1}{2}'' \times 1''$ . Colour, ochreous. Sharp. Shallow flaking producing very thin section near tip. Butt carefully flaked. Found 1912. Terrace B (?). Cf. with *Preh. Farnh.*, Plate 2, Fig. 3.
- c: Small ficron. Middle Acheulian.  $3\frac{1}{4}'' \times 1\frac{1}{2}'' \times \frac{1}{2}''$ . Sharp. Colour, chocolate brown. Clear flint with thin cortex on butt. Found 1912. Terrace B (?).
- d: Late-Middle or Upper Acheulian ovate.  $3\frac{1}{2}'' \times 2\frac{1}{2}'' \times 1''$ . Colour, ochreous yellow with creamy patches. Incipient "toad belly" patina towards thick butt which has thin smooth cortex. Found 1911. Terrace B (?). Sharp.
- e: Small beaked ovate. Late-Middle or Upper Acheulian.  $3\frac{1}{4}'' \times 2\frac{1}{2}'' \times 1\frac{1}{8}''$ . Colour, bluish-grey; numerous spherulitic inclusions. Sharp. Reddish-brown cortex on butt. Shallow flaking; curved edge carefully worked to produce cutting edge (right in figure). Found June 17, 1914. Terrace B (?).
- f: Late-Middle or Upper Acheulian cordate.  $3\frac{3}{4}'' \times 2\frac{3}{8}'' \times 1\frac{3}{4}''$ . Sharp. Colour, deep bluish-grey. Some cortex. One edge very carefully worked from both sides (left in figure). Found June 10, 1921. Terrace A.
- g: Small pointed hand-axe. Late-Middle Acheulian. Very sharp. Bold flaking with careful retouch at point. Bluish-grey flint with cortex on butt.  $3\frac{1}{4}'' \times 2\frac{1}{2}'' \times 1\frac{1}{4}''$ . Found 1912. Terrace B (?).

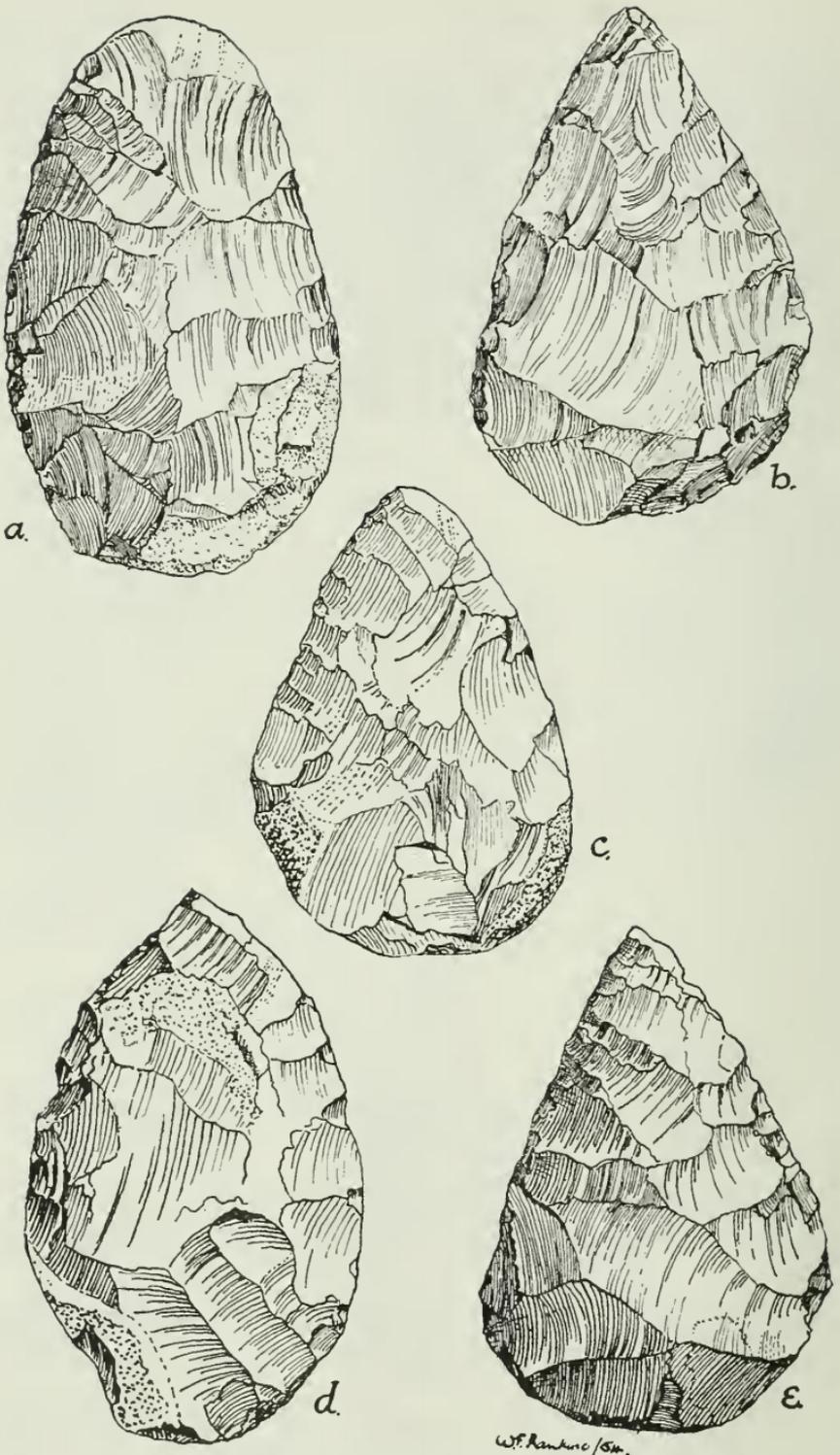


FIG. 2.—ACHEULIAN HAND-AXES FROM TERRACES A AND B.  
FALKNER COLLECTION. See text. Half-size.

- h*: Superb pyriform hand-axe. Late-Middle to Upper Acheulian.  $4\frac{1}{4}'' \times 2'' \times 1\frac{1}{8}''$ . Colour, deep brown with olive-green tingeing. Yellowish inclusions. Thick porous reddish cortex on both faces. Bold flaking; one edge vigorously flaked to produce cutting edge (left in figure). Found December 11, 1913. Terrace B (?).
- i*: Ficron type. Late-Middle Acheulian.  $3\frac{1}{4}'' \times 2\frac{1}{4}'' \times \frac{3}{8}''$ . Colour, reddish-brown. Sharp. Cherty flint with thin cortex enveloping butt, pebble tool. Found February 20, 1913. Terrace B (?).
- 2, *a*: Upper Acheulian ovate.  $5\frac{1}{4}'' \times 3\frac{1}{4}'' \times 1\frac{1}{2}''$ . Flat flaking producing very thin section at tip. Marbled flint, mottled with cherty inclusions. Colour, reddish-brown to yellow. Thick cortex on butt. Very sharp. A superb implement. Found December 13, 1913. Terrace B (?).
- b*: Late-Middle Acheulian ovate.  $5\frac{1}{4}'' \times 3\frac{1}{4}'' \times 1\frac{3}{8}''$ . Colour, light ochreous on one face and deep ochreous on reverse. Sharp. Shallow flaking with one edge carefully worked (right in figure). Found January 24, 1913. Terrace B (?).
- c*: Late-Middle Acheulian ovate.  $4\frac{1}{2}'' \times 3\frac{1}{4}'' \times 1\frac{1}{4}''$ . Colour, light brownish-yellow tinged with grey. Cortex on butt. Shallow flaking with careful edge-work, particularly on one edge (left in figure). Found November 27, 1912. Terrace B (?).
- d*: Ovate. Late-Middle to Upper Acheulian.  $5\frac{1}{4}'' \times 3\frac{1}{4}'' \times 1\frac{1}{2}''$ . Colour, ochreous. Some thick cortex on butt. Sharp. Bold flaking with much secondary retouch on one edge (left in figure). Found December 13, 1913, 1 foot from base of gravel. Terrace B (?).
- e*: Late-Middle Acheulian pyriform hand-axe.  $5'' \times 3\frac{1}{4}'' \times 1\frac{1}{8}''$ . Sharp. Colour, chestnut brown with dark yellow inclusions producing an attractive mottling. Shallow flaking with fine edge-work. Found August 4, 1920. Terrace A (?).

The outstanding implement in the Falkner Collection is illustrated in Fig. 3: it is a large rostrid hand-axe of Middle Acheulian date. It is one of the largest implements yet recorded from the Farnham terraces. It measures 9 inches in length and 5 inches in width while its thickness slightly exceeds 2 inches. It weighs just over 3 pounds. It has a remarkably thin section near the tip. It was dug by a Mr. Richard Warner on May 15, 1911, on the south side of the pit and therefore may be considered as deriving from Terrace B. In colour it is greyish-yellow with some bluish-grey patches. It is very sharp with very few inclusions, and free of cortex. The flaking is bold and economical and there is a minimum of edge-work. As indicated in the figure the implement is much frost-cracked.

It should be stressed that this collection is of special importance in that it is the only known assemblage of flints from the Farnham terraces with authentic discovery data; also it is of interest to note that in this excavation 1 acre of gravel yielded some seventy palæoliths and that a regular distribution of the artifacts is indicated by the progressive discoveries established by the dating of the finds.

Also in this collection there are four ovates from Dippenhall which demand record. They derive from the Dippenhall gravels which lie on the northern side of the Farnham valley; they have

been classed with Terrace A (*Preh. Farnh.*, p. 24), and Bury recorded an artifact from these gravels in 1916 but afterwards considered it to be natural. However, Mr. Falkner obtained four Acheulian hand-axes from his land at Dippenhall—three from the surface and one from a depth of 3 feet in the gravels at Aberdenes, N.G. 41/817473. All the ovates are of medium size and patinated a creamy white.



FIG. 3.—MIDDLE ACHEULIAN HAND-AXE.  
Half-size.

#### BORELLI COLLECTION

The collection of palæoliths assembled by the late Mr. C. E. Borelli, of Farnham, contains many implements recovered in the early days of gravel digging on the terraces and some date prior to 1910. Notable among the exposures then being exploited were Ward's Pit, the Ridgway Pit, Shortheath Pit and Great Austins, all

in Terrace A; they were centres of attraction to numerous collectors and, unfortunately, also centres of dispersal so far as Farnham is concerned. However, a great many of the implements in the collection came from Mr. Borelli's own pit at Stoneyfields, in Terrace B, which was worked from about 1935 to 1950. These Stoneyfields palæoliths are of particular interest in connection with the old controversy, now ended, concerning the origin of the Terrace B gravels.

Among the many Acheulian hand-axes in this collection from Ward's Pit, now the site of the Bourne Church, are two implements almost identical in size and shape and of the same kind of flint material; they were found almost side by side at the same depth, some 8 feet from the surface. On account of their striking resemblance to one another they were named "The Twins" by the late Reginald Smith, then of the British Museum. These two palæoliths are illustrated in Fig. 4.

*Description of Fig. 4.*

*A:* Lingulate hand-axe.  $7\frac{1}{2}'' \times 4'' \times 2''$ . Boldly flaked and deeply notched on both edges. Similar notching has been observed by the writer on hand-axes, also lingulates, from Chiver's Pit, Cupernham, near Romsey. Colour, creamish-buff with bluish-grey patches. Cherty inclusions with cortex on the butt.

*B:* Lingulate hand-axe.  $7\frac{1}{2}'' \times 4'' \times 1\frac{3}{4}''$ . Boldly flaked with careful edge-work near the tip (right in figure). Colour and material as in preceding figure. Both implements show some frost-cracking and both are Acheulian types.

Among other interesting implements from Terrace A the following are noteworthy but are not illustrated:

From Mavins close by Ward's Pit is a sharp Middle Acheulian ovate,  $4\frac{1}{2}'' \times 3\frac{1}{2}'' \times 1\frac{1}{2}''$ , of creamy ochreous colour with an accentuated S-twist. Also from the same provenance is a remarkably symmetrical lingulate hand-axe with straight sides terminating in a sharp point. It is of Middle Acheulian type, measuring  $5\frac{1}{2}'' \times 3'' \times 1\frac{1}{2}''$ , and pale ochreous in colour.

From Shortheath Pit is a shouldered ficron  $8\frac{1}{2}''$  in length, with slightly beaked tip and somewhat abraded. From Wakeford's Pit, Terrace C, is a Middle Acheulian cleaver,  $7\frac{1}{2}'' \times 3\frac{1}{2}'' \times 1\frac{1}{2}''$ , similar in colour and preparation technique to the remarkable implement of the same type from the same pit figured in *Preh. Farnh.*, p. 43, but 2 inches shorter.

The collection contains some thirty palæoliths from Stoneyfields Pit in Terrace B, the one-time controversial bone of contention as to whether the gravels there were peri-glacially disturbed or of glacial origin. Noteworthy among these implements are:

A shouldered ficron  $6\frac{1}{2}''$  in length, and another  $5\frac{1}{2}''$  long; a rostrid lingulate,  $8\frac{1}{2}'' \times 3\frac{3}{4}'' \times 2''$ , lustrous with slightly softened arretes; a cleaver  $6\frac{1}{2}'' \times 3\frac{1}{2}'' \times 1\frac{1}{4}''$ , sharp, pale ochreous in colour and very economically flaked, and a sharp flake of Clactonian character. Among the 14 ovates 8 are large, exceeding 6'' in length, and 6 are medium between 4'' and 6'' in length. There are 6 cordates of the type Fig. 2a.

The pit was exhausted in 1950 after some 9 acres of gravel had been excavated; the face of the pit clearly showed solifluxion of stratified gravel right to the western edge (*Preh. Farnh.*, pp. 28, 29). The Borelli Collection is now in the writer's possession.

#### CONCLUSION

The amount of gravel now, in 1954, being taken from the Farnham terraces is practically negligible. The famous pits studied by Bury

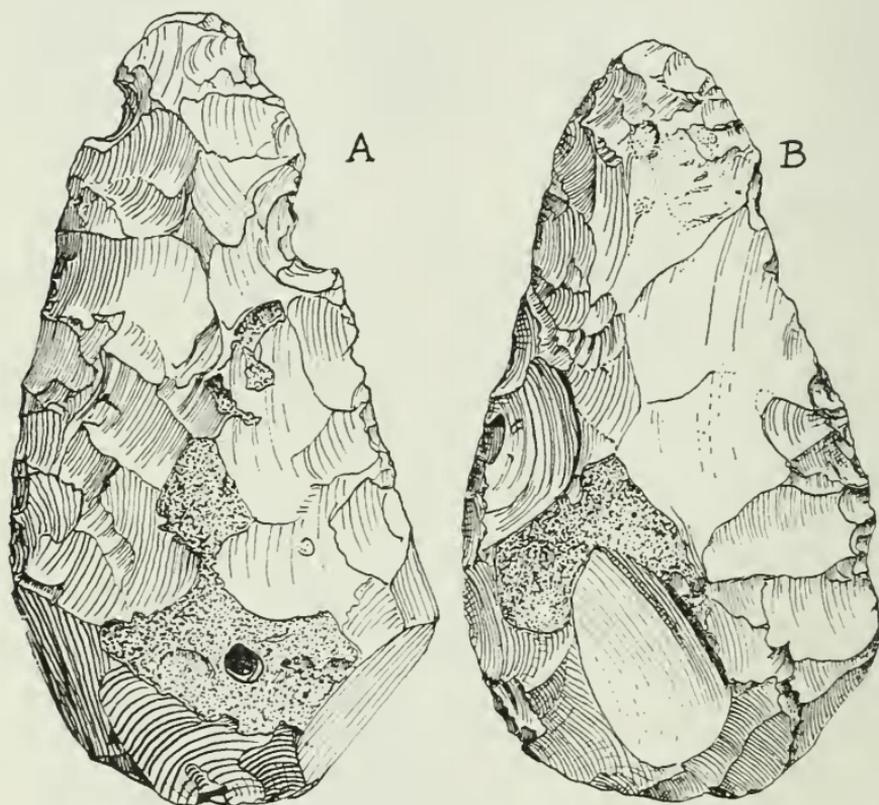


FIG. 4.—ACHEULIAN HAND-AXES FROM WARD'S PIT.  
Half-size.

and others are now obliterated by building. Bourne Church marks the site of Ward's Pit where the famous sunken channel yielded large numbers of palæoliths and attracted many collectors, notably Frank Lasham. Broken Back is now a residential area, and so is Shortheath Pit where Thurbens Estate has been built. Similarly the Six Bells Pit is now the Roman Way Estate. The Great Austins Pit which at one time extended from Tilford Road to Ward's Pit is now completely built over, and the one-time Junction Pit is now the Farnham Trading Estate.

Sections of the terrace gravels are now difficult and, in some instances, impossible to find. Tanners Pit, N.G. 41/827453, by the road leading from Abbotts Garage, Wreclesham, to the Alton Road, shows Terrace D gravels bedded on Folkestone Sands, and Weydon Pit, N.G. 41/837458, also shows a similar section in the same terrace where the gravel is feathering out on the south bank of the Old Blackwater River. Terrace A has been nearly completely removed but stretches of Terraces B and C were never exploited and are now under houses. And of the thousands of palæoliths which have been turned out of these famed deposits none can be seen in a local museum.

#### *Acknowledgements*

My thanks are due to Mr. Harold Falkner, of Farnham, for kindly placing his palæoliths at my disposal for study and recording, and to Dr. K. P. Oakley for much help in the compilation of this contribution.