

Early days in west London: a study of Frederick Sadler (1873 - 1953) and his Collection

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IN OCTOBER 1929 the newly created Gunnersbury Park Museum in west London opened to display the collection of prehistoric implements and later artefacts purchased by public subscription from the former Acton Borough Engineer and Surveyor. The publicity material announced the hope that the so-called Sadler Collection

"will form the nucleus of a museum of local antiquities which can be enlarged as more material directly concerned with Acton, Brentford, Chiswick or Ealing is received."¹

The collection is today most widely known for its prehistoric material (it contains over 2000 artefacts), but the 419 volumes in Sadler's local history library, the antiquarian maps (over 100) and his collection of prints and documents have provided the foundation for the study of the history of the area; the museum which has grown out of it, still housed in the Large Mansion in Gunnersbury Park and now funded jointly by the London Boroughs of Ealing and Hounslow, provides the "tangible memory" to Sadler's antiquarian researches which he was "most anxious to leave in Acton."²

Sadler's Life

Frederick Sadler was born in Widnes in Lancashire on the 10th July 1873. His father Thomas Sadler was by trade a master builder, and Frederick appears to have started out in his father's footsteps and trained as a civil engineer and surveyor. His interest in archaeology appears to have been stimulated on his arrival in Acton in 1903, where he was to take up the post of Engineer and Surveyor to the Urban District Council. He was to retain this position and that of architect to the Education Committee, after Acton's incorporation as a borough in 1921, until 1926.

His arrival in the borough, after the discoveries of palaeolithic artefacts, animal bones and flint-working floors by Pitt-Rivers and Allen Brown, was at a time of widespread antiquarian interest in the "implementiferous"³ river gravels of west London.

1. Leaflet, October 1929. Gunnersbury Park Museum (GPM) Sadler Box File 2.
2. Letter to William King Baker, 21/8/1927. GPM Box File 2.
3. Coined by Sir John Evans. Quoted by J A Brown, GPM Sadler Book Collection 79, p 47.

Inspired by these discoveries, his position with the council gave him a unique opportunity to pursue his geological and archaeological interests as suburban development around the turn of the century transformed the face of these, once-rural areas. As Borough Engineer he regularly visited the local gravel pits and building sites, inspecting the stratigraphy and any finds in the pits, trenches and boreholes. He began to purchase palaeoliths on these visits and the majority of the artefacts in his collection were obtained between 1908 and 1915.

It was at this time that he attempted to bring his discoveries to the attention of the wider Acton



Fig. 1: Frederick Sadler: appointed Deputy Assistant Director of Roads on the Western Front during World War One. Even on active service he collected flints from the trenches of the Somme.

community. From 1911 until the outbreak of war in 1914 he mounted an exhibition of objects from his collection in the Acton Public Library,

"with notes attached to the cases to assist the general observer to a clearer understanding of the subject".

The exhibition was

"arranged to illustrate the gradual development in the making of stone implements by primitive man: eolithic, palaeolithic and neolithic ... In addition there are specimens shewing the peculiar fracture of flint and how this assists in the detection of human workmanship."⁴

In the following year there appeared William King Baker's book *Acton, Middlesex*, a survey of Acton from its earliest times to the modern achievements of the Urban District Council. With its photographs of the members and officers of the Council, including Sadler, this book harnessed the work of its Engineer and Surveyor with civic pride. In it was published not only Sadler's 1912 Town Planning Scheme, but also the only account in print written by Sadler of his discoveries and the prehistory of the Thames Valley, which forms the kernel of the chapter on Prehistoric Acton⁵.

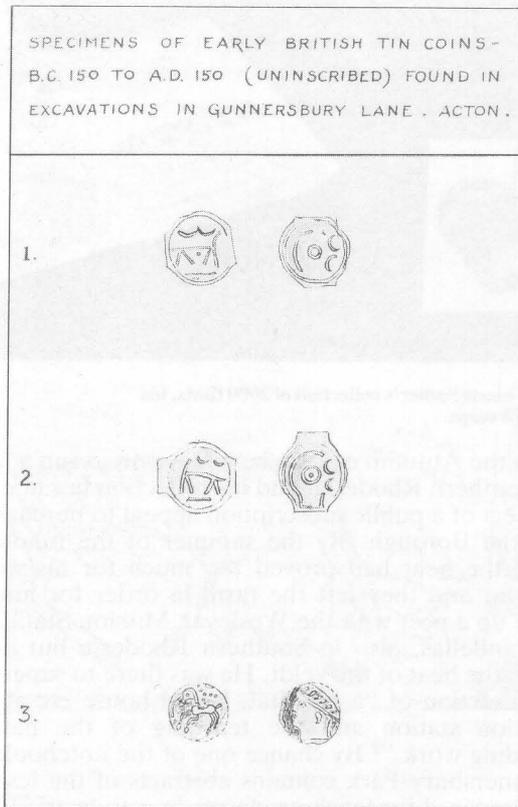


Fig. 2: Sadler lectured widely on many topics of local interest, using material from his own collection and studies. Shown here is his own drawing used in the preparation of one of his lantern slides.

The First World War interrupted Sadler's civilian career from late 1916 when he entered the Army. He was commissioned into the Royal Engineers as Acting Captain in January 1917, and promoted to Acting Major by April. In October he was again promoted and appointed Deputy Assistant Director of Roads on the Western Front⁶ (Fig. 1). It may be expected that his entry into the Army would have curtailed his archaeological pursuits, but again it had been his civilian profession which provided him with opportunities which he could not miss. The exigencies of war had contrived to send him to the place which first provided the scientific world with proof of the prehistoric origins of man: the Somme Valley. Among the records of the artefacts in the collection provenanced from this area are recorded 28 handaxes, cores and scrapers, palaeolithic and neolithic, collected while he was on active service: from Picqinny, Picquent and Hangest sur Somme "found when trenching in 1918" (632-652, 18)⁷, from Arques St Omer "found 1917" (943), while the entry for a neolithic scraper found by Sadler in 1918 conceals the horrors of those times behind the comment "Noyon, France. Picked up on retreat" (275).

Not only did the war provide Sadler with opportunities for collecting artefacts on the ground, but his position also provided him with an insight into a technique which was to become a valuable tool for further archaeological inquiry. As he explained in a lecture which he gave after the war, showing a slide of an area of ridge and furrow:

"During the war I received periodically from the RAF ... photos of the land behind German lines ... to indicate the conditions of the roads over which our transport would have to travel when a push took place ... On the photo you can see clearly these narrow parallel strips in spite of the shelling to which the land had been subjected ... the strips however had entirely disappeared by the day of the taking of the Ridge, owing to the terrific bombardment."⁸

In the midst of the build-up to the taking of the Messines Ridge in 1917 he had become aware of the potential of air surveys for archaeology, seven years before O G S Crawford's seminal work *Air Survey and Archaeology* made this technique more widely known.

Sadler returned to civilian life by May 1920 and took up his old post. Thereafter, although he added

- 4.i) Undated newspaper cutting, pasted into GPM Sadler Book un-numbered, C E Vulliamy (1930) *Archaeology of Middlesex and London*.
- ii) Letter from Llewellyn Treacher, 15/3/1911. GPM Box File 2.
5. W K Baker *Acton, Middlesex* (1912) pp 15-19, 272, 307.
6. Army List 1917. Extract in GPM Box File 1.
7. Numbers in brackets refer to entries in original leather ledger, pre-1926 catalogue. GPM Box File 3.
8. Lecture to Acton Scientific and Literary Society, 25/9/1924. GPM Box File 2.



Fig. 3: the museum in Gunnersbury Park was founded to house Sadler's collection of 2000 flints, his reference library and his maps.

some artefacts to his collection, he concentrated rather more on his antiquarian researches in the PRO and the muniment rooms and archives of London and Middlesex. Among his papers deposited at Gunnersbury Park Museum are the texts of several of the lectures which he gave in 1924/5. Their titles illustrate his interests at this time: "Famous Actonians of the Past", "Old Village Life and Customs", "Bygone Acton", "the Manor of Acton in the Middle Ages" (Fig. 2). There are also several drafts of the book which he never completed, which was to be entitled *Acton and Actonians of the Past*. He saw this book as summarising the twenty years of his activity in Acton, and it is interesting to note that his prehistoric material forms merely the first chapter of the projected fourteen⁹.

9. GPM Box File 2.

In the Autumn of 1926 he left Acton to run a farm in Southern Rhodesia, and his collection became the subject of a public subscription appeal to purchase it for the Borough. By the summer of the following year the heat had proved too much for his wife's health, and they left the farm in order for him to take up a post with the Wesleyan Mission Station at Marandellas, also in Southern Rhodesia but away from the heat of the veldt. He was there to supervise the erection of "a hospital, hostel house etc at the mission station and the teaching of the natives building work."² By chance one of the notebooks in Gunnersbury Park contains abstracts of the lessons he prepared for teaching classes in woodwork¹⁰. His letter goes on to explain that "there are 300 boys and 100 girls being taught at the mission station" and that

10. Notebook. GPM TS7.

although “the salary paid is only a small one ... there are opportunities for doing service which carries a greater reward than money.”²

He was to stay in Africa for ten years, until retiring in 1937, when he returned to England, to the Crosby area of Lancashire, where the rest of his family still lived. He took up an appointment as the Superintendent and Architect of the Crosby and Litherland Joint Cemetery Board, became a Trustee of the Moor Lane Methodist Church in Crosby, and as might be expected became an active member of the Crosby and District Historical Society. Nevertheless he attempted to maintain his links with the Wesleyan missions in Africa by becoming the church Missionary Secretary, “work which took him to the docks on many occasions to meet and to arrange accommodation” for African students on their arrival in England. He also found time to visit the museum in Gunnersbury Park and the local societies

in Acton, lecturing and adding to or borrowing items from the Sadler Collection. This indomitable figure died aged 80 after a road accident on his way from the Moor Lane church in November 1953¹¹.

The Sadler Collection

The Sadler Collection repays attention not only for the wealth of prehistoric material of which it is composed, which is largely outside the scope of this article, but also because of the survival of some of Sadler’s correspondence and notebooks preserved in the Gunnersbury Park Museum (Figs. 3, 4). The most important is the leather-spined ledger in which Sadler first started to catalogue his collection between 1911 and 1916, transcribing details from previous notebooks and the labels on the implements and their boxes. In this catalogue⁷ Sadler meticulously records all the details he has relating to the artefacts, description, provenance, date found, 11. Obituary, *Crosby Herald* 20/11/1953. Copy. GPM Box File 1.

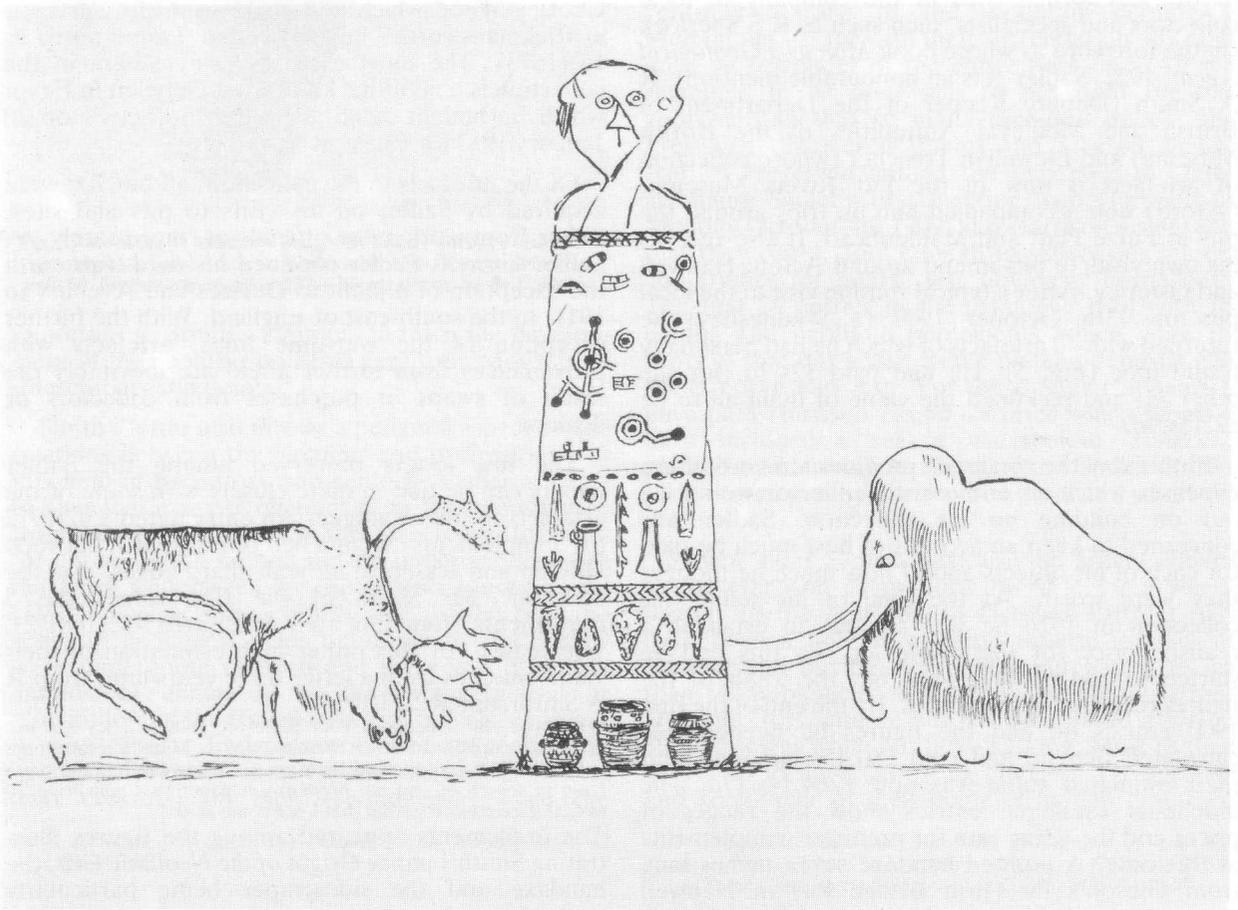


Fig. 4: sketch by Sadler of various prehistoric motifs, drawn on the flyleaf of his leather-bound collection of papers by Pitt-Rivers and Allen Brown (Sadler Book Collection No. 79).

whether collected personally or purchased, price paid and an estimate of the object's worth. From these details it is possible to reconstruct the processes and mechanics of Sadler's collecting, as well as the extent of his collection prior to his emigration, for some of it was dispersed to friends and other collections before it was offered for purchase by the people of Acton. At its greatest extent in the ledger there are 3068 catalogue entries, many of them multiple; whereas the catalogue made on the collection's arrival in Gunnersbury Park Museum has 2200 entries.

The catalogue records the dates and the fruits of many implement-hunting trips in and around west London as well as further afield in Kent, Hertfordshire, Berkshire and Surrey. They range from the organised excursions of the Geologists' Association: on April 20th 1912 they went to Swanscombe and Greenhithe, on which occasion Sadler spent 2s.6d. on eight handaxes (which he later valued at 13s.6d.); to the less formal trips in the company of local collectors and specialists, men such as R S Sherlock (in the foreword to whose book *Man as a Geological Agent*, 1922, Sadler gets an honourable mention), R A Smith (Deputy Keeper of the Department of British and Medieval Antiquities of the British Museum) and Llewellyn Treacher (whose collection of artefacts is now in the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford) who accompanied him on trips around the pits at Furze Platt and Maidenhead. It also records his own visits to pits in and around Acton, Hanwell and Osterley. After a typical routine visit to the local pits on 13th October 1909 (a Wednesday) he returned with 40 artefacts of which he had personally found nine (Fig. 5). He had paid 12s.7d. for the other 31, and reckoned the value of them all to be £2.15s.9d.

In this way the catalogue provides a record of the expenses which an enthusiastic collector would lay out on building up his collection. Sadler was concerned to keep an account of how much he paid for each of his objects and of how much he thought they were worth. At the time of his selling his collection in 1926 he was anxious to establish a realistic price for the whole lot. To this end he started to add up and work out the totals of the figures recorded in the entries. By the end of the first 1900 entries he had the figures he needed. He calculated that he had paid £80.15s.11d. and that their estimated value was now £264.14s.17d. The individual catalogue entries show the ranges of prices and the going rate for prehistoric implements at this time. A pointed handaxe seven inches long from Gibson's Pit (Iron Bridge Pit) in Hanwell

"stated by the foreman to be the best and largest ever found in their pit" was bought for 3s.6d. although valued at 15s. (498); whereas another handaxe from Mill End in Hertfordshire, ten inches long and "one of the finest implements ever obtained from this pit" was sold to Sadler for 20s. (£1) and said to be worth £4 (1441). These were exceptions, as in general the prices recorded for purchases direct from the pits varied from one penny to one shilling, most falling in the threepence to sixpence range. The prices Sadler was willing to pay seem also to have varied according to who was selling: a palaeolithic flake from Bakers Hole "obtained from the Foreman Northfleet UDC, October 1910" valued at 5s. as bought for 6d. (937); a similar item valued at 10s. was bought from a collector for 5s., half its value (398). In general, stone artefacts bought from other collectors usually cost between three and ten shillings. For unusual or particularly fine examples Sadler was prepared to pay much more: for a Neolithic polished axe from Chorley Wood which he bought from the Surveyor at Rickmansworth¹² he paid £2.10s. (value noted as £5)(1673). The most expensive single item in the collection is a neolithic knife from Gebelen in Egypt which he bought at an auction at Sotheby's on 20 January 1913 for £3.5s., worth £5 (56).

Of the artefacts in the collection, all but 700 were acquired by Sadler on his visits to pits and sites, either from workers or officials or, more rarely, by Sadler himself. Sadler confined his field-trips, with the exception of a jaunt to Devizes and Avebury in 1911, to the south-east of England. With the further exception of the war-time finds, artefacts with provenances from further afield are inevitably the result of swaps or purchases from collectors or dealers.

The few letters preserved among the Sadler papers can be tied in quite closely with some of the artefacts in the catalogue. An entry dated 25/2/1912 for 5 implements "from a bed of brickearth between Hitchin and Ickleford all with sharp edges" has the addition "Mr Smith of the BM values the 5 implements from this area at £5" (841-3, 1681-2). The reason for this rather high estimation of their value emerges from a letter three years later from R A Smith, dated 22/5/1915¹³:

"Don't be alarmed about your Ickleford things. They are put aside in a cupboard for my examination. ... Might I retain them ... till the 31st ... and send them on ...? They are just the types I am in search of and am preparing a paper that will bring all similar specimens together that I can come across."

The implements appeared among the figures illustrating Smith's paper *Origin of the Neolithic Celt*, the handaxe and the sidescraper being particularly

12. Albert Freeman, also Secretary of the Rickmansworth Gravel Company.

13. Letter pasted into GPM Sadler book un-numbered, Vulliamy 1930.



Fig. 5: one of the 40 handaxes bought by Sadler during a visit of the gravel pits around Acton on Wednesday 13th October 1909. He paid 6d. for this one, number 227 in his catalogue. Scale 2"/50mm.

important to Smith's attempts to trace the development of the neolithic polished axes from Mousterian sidescrapers and points¹⁴.

Smith's letter also throws a personal aspect on the relations between the amateur and professionals in this field of prehistory and geology. Sadler appears to have lent many of his finds from Rickmansworth, from the Mill End and Croxley Green pits, to Smith for an exhibition he had put on in connection with the work undertaken by the British Museum and HM Geological Survey in this area. At this time the series of geological maps published by the Survey were undergoing revision and there was a certain amount of debate as to the origin (glacial or "fluviatile") of the Rickmansworth gravels, especially with similar finds elsewhere of palaeoliths in "plateau" gravel (otherwise unclassified high-level drift deposits) on high ground away from the

14. R A Smith 'Origin of the Neolithic Celt' *Archaeologia* 67 (1916) 27-48.

15. R A Smith & H Dewey 'Researches at Rickmansworth: Report on the Excavations made in 1914 on behalf of the BM' *Archaeologia* 66 (1915) 195-224.

rivers¹⁵. Smith comments on Sadler's loan:

"Your palaeoliths were much appreciated, except perhaps by the professed geologists, who regard them as a standing insult to the Survey. I am much obliged to you personally for the exhibit and the information."¹³

A strong thread throughout the Sadler catalogue and papers is his belief in the human workmanship of the "eolithic implements" found by Benjamin Harrison of Ightham in the Pliocene drift deposits on the North Downs near Ash in Kent, although many scholars held that these "eoliths" were the result of natural agencies. At the time of Sadler's first visit to Harrison in 1909 the debate still raged over these chipped flints, twenty years after Prestwich had first published an account of Harrison's discoveries¹⁶. The debate was shortly to be revitalised by similar finds in the Red Crag pre-glacial sands in East Anglia (though these deposits are currently classed as Lower Pleistocene). But now, aged 71, Harrison scented victory with his forthcoming address to the "Museum Association"¹⁷ which he described as "entirely a case of the mountain coming to Mohammed. ... for with their surrender on any point must be surrender of the entire position." All that remained to be done was to put right the misapprehension that so many laboured under "that Prestwich discovered [them] and I acted as Second."¹⁸ Preserved among the papers is the letter arranging Sadler's first meeting with Harrison for Monday October 4th 1909; and Harrison's assurance that they could "find enough to satisfy our interest and studies for hours" was obviously borne out¹⁹. The first 28 entries in the catalogue deal with the eoliths and neolithic implements which were the fruits of that day's visit to the plateau deposits near West Yorke and Ash. For these Sadler appears to have paid Harrison 27s.6d., a price which seems to have included a set of watercolour *Timecards* painted by Harrison to illustrate the Sadler eoliths. In his catalogue Sadler records the value of all this at 53s.

A year later Sadler, obviously an ardent convert to the Harrison camp, took his wife for a week's holiday to the Ash area in October 1910. It must have been a holiday of fairly intense implement-hunting and buying, for Sadler purchased no less than 142 implements and eoliths from local farmers and collectors, and he and his wife found a further 30 themselves while out field-walking. Most of them he seems to have shown to Harrison for approval and acceptance of their being of human origin, for

16. J Prestwich 'On the primitive characters of the flint implements of the Chalk Plateau of Kent' in *Collected Papers on Some Controverted Questions in Geology* (1895) 49-80.

17. Founded 1889.

18. Letter from Benjamin Harrison (a) undated. GPM Box File 2.

19. Letter from Benjamin Harrison (b) undated. GPM Box File 2.

many are catalogued with Harrison's comments: "extremely good work on one side" (507), "very good type of bow-scraper" (600). Several of the entries for this week give clear insight into the characters and developing relations between the two men. 705-9 records a visit to Brandshatch near Ash on 8th October 1910. Implements were found "2' 6" - 3' 6" below the existing ground level in the red drift. Had men employed excavating, BH and self examining the stones. BH taking the best specimens."

Sadler managed to get only 5 specimens from this search. In the light of this irritation one can assess the entry for object 595 an eolith "from above Falkham Green, Ash, Kent" which was also discovered on this holiday. Sadler records that he paid 6d. for it and reckoned it to be worth 5s. He adds that BH commented "an extremely fine implement of old Palaeolithic type" and "offered 2/6 for it". It is significant that he didn't get it.

Sometime around 1908 Sadler purchased the eponymous Loydell Collection to add to his own. Almost nothing is known about the man who put this collection together, except that he seems to have been active in west London between 1880 and 1905. The list of provenances and previous owners of the Loydell material reads rather like an index to a textbook on the early days of the study of British prehistory: Swanscombe, Bakers Hole, Warren Hill, Creffield Road. Many of the artefacts have the names of previous owners recorded and can be traced through several changes of hands before their acquisition by Sadler. Some were given by John Allen Brown to Loydell, including finds from his Creffield Road floor as well as others which he had obtained from dealers, many were given by Allen Brown's wife after his death; others came from Peter Crooke of Brentford (the remainder of whose extensive collection is also now in Gunnersbury Park Museum), or from A S Kennard, particularly the Swanscombe or Milton Street (Barnfield Pit) finds. Perhaps some of the most interesting pieces from the historical point of view are five handaxes from Abbeville and the Somme Valley (1003, 1040, 1046, 1085, 1099). They were originally in the collection of Boucher de Perthes, the French amateur archaeologist, whose discoveries of palaeolithic implements in the Pleistocene river gravels of the Somme Valley provided Prestwich, Evans and the English scientific community with unquestionable proof of "antediluvian man". These five artefacts, given by

20. D Whipp & L Blackmore 'Thomas Layton FSA (1819-1911) 'A Misguided Antiquary' ' *London Archaeol* 3 no. 4 (1977) 90-6.

Boucher de Perthes to a certain Captain Galton, in Sadler's time still had their original labels said to have been signed by Boucher de Perthes himself.

Equally interesting but perhaps rather more puzzling are a group of nine undated entries, from their position in the catalogue made sometime between 1913 and 1915 (1742-50). They are for nine "Neolithic Celts" from the River Thames. The entries are endorsed "obtained from Dr Gregory who obtained them from Mr Layton's Collection, Kew Bridge". Although Sadler's catalogue was not compiled in strict chronological order of acquisition, and the other artefacts which Sadler obtained from Dr Gregory's shop in the Fulham Road carry dates ranging from 1909 to 1922, it seems unlikely that these axes were acquired before Thomas Layton's death in 1911. Layton has been described as being unable to "bear to part with even the most trivial" [object] and "throughout his life he guarded his collection with a fierce possessiveness."²⁰ The collection of artefacts left by the terms of his will to form a museum in his home at Kew Bridge Road, was moved from there to be stored and catalogued in Brentford Library in 1913, which seems the most likely date for their coming into Dr Gregory's possession. By what route they found their way there will probably never be known, but it seems likely that one more form of infringement of the wishes of the late Thomas Layton must have occurred. In any case no money seems to have changed hands and Dr Gregory charged Sadler nothing for these axes which were valued at £1.13s.

Assessment of Sadler's contribution

Unlike many of the influential figures in the early studies of British prehistory, Frederick Sadler published very little himself: the account in King Baker (1912) is to the author's knowledge the only piece written by Sadler to have appeared in print. This is not to suggest that he in any way kept his collection or his discoveries to himself: he lectured widely, took pains to exhibit his finds as widely as possible and was most anxious that others should draw upon his wealth of material. R A Smith took pains to stress the size and quality of Sadler's material from Rickmansworth, which were invaluable in the assessment of the geology of that area¹⁵.

Sadler was himself primarily a collector and was never in the forefront of academic research, but he

21. White-cloth catalogue, 1926, Introduction. GPM Box File 3.

22. GPM Box File 2.

23. Borough Treasurer's statement, 23/1/1928. GPM Box File 2.

was in close touch with those who were and was quick to see the implications of the work of others. His collection and papers reflect the discoveries and controversies of the prehistorians and geologists of his day: the Eolithic controversy, the identification and growing acceptance of the Mesolithic as a transitional period between the clearly defined Palaeolithic and Neolithic ages²¹.

This article has concentrated on Sadler's collecting and prehistoric interests, but his contribution in other fields must not be overlooked. Although the results of his antiquarian researches may not have stood the test of time and the subsequent discovery of documents unknown to him, Sadler's concern to collect early maps and documents relating to the west London and Middlesex area and also books of local interest (geological, historical or biographical), has created an exceptional resource, preserving in one place many things which might otherwise have been lost or dispersed.

Sadler himself was unhappy that he was obliged to sell rather than present his collection to the Borough. In a letter to King Baker dated Christmas Day 1926²² he wrote

"It was my intention to present it when I retired, but circumstances have made that impossible, having regard to my health and that of my family and the uncertainty of my future prospects".

But it may be that had he given the collection to the Borough it could well have suffered the unhappy fate of the Layton Collection, which remained largely in storage for fifty years until it was taken out of Brentford and put mainly into the reserve collection of the London Museum (now the Museum of London). It was the generation of public interest in the Sadler Collection Appeal by the indefatigable Miss Susan Smee (who was to be the first curator of the Gunnersbury Park Museum from 1928 until after the Second World War) and by William King Baker, which led to 112 subscribers raising £510.13s. by 23rd January 1928, and which ensured that the collection could not be put into storage and forgotten. Thomas Layton left £20,000 in his will for the setting up of his museum; the Sadler Collection was found a home and displayed with the balance of the appeal fund after the deduction of the purchase price and expenses, a sum of £10.10s.7d.²³

Acknowledgements

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The photographs are by the Audio-Visual Unit of the London Borough of Hounslow, reproduced by courtesy of the Gunnersbury Park Museum.

Excavations & Post-Excavation Work

City, by Museum of London, Department of Urban Archaeology. A series of long term excavations. Enquiries to DUA, Museum of London, London Wall, EC2Y 5HN (01-600 3699).

Croydon & District, processing and cataloguing of excavated and museum collections every Tuesday throughout the year. Archaeological reference collection of fabric types, domestic animal bones, clay tobacco pipes and glass ware also available for comparative work. Enquiries to Mrs Muriel Shaw, 28 Lismore Road, South Croydon, CR2 7QA (01-688 2720).

Greater London (except north-east and south-east London), by Museum of London, Department of Greater London Archaeology. Excavations and processing in all areas. General enquiries to DGLA, Museum of London (01-600 3699 x241).

Local enquiries to:

North London: 3-7 Ray Street, London EC1R 3DJ (01-837 8363).
South-west London: St. Luke's House, Sandycroft Road, Kew, Surrey (01-940 5989).

Southwark and Lambeth: 6-8 Cole Street, London SE1 4YH (01-407 1989 or 403 2920 - office - and 407 1258 - warehouse).

West London: 273A Brentford High Street, Brentford, Middlesex (01-560 3880).

Hammersmith & Fulham, by Fulham Archaeological Rescue Group. Processing of material from Fulham Palace. Tuesdays, 7.45 p.m.-10 p.m. at Fulham Palace, Bishop's Avenue, Fulham

Palace Road, SW6. Contact Keith Whitehouse, 86 Clancarty Road, SW6 (01-731 4498).

Kingston, by Kingston upon Thames Archaeological Society. Rescue sites in the town centre. Enquiries to Marion Shipley, Kingston Heritage Centre, Fairfield Road, Kingston (01-546 5386).

North-east London, by Passmore Edwards Museum. Enquiries to Pat Wilkinson, Passmore Edwards Museum, Romford Road, E15 4LW (01-534 4545).

Surrey, by Surrey Archaeological Unit. Enquiries to David Bird, County Archaeological Officer, Planning Department, County Hall, Kingston, Surrey (01-541 8911).

Vauxhall Pottery, by Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Society. Processing of excavated material continues three nights a week. Enquiries to S.L.A.S., c/o Cuming Museum, 155 Walworth Road, SE17 (01-703 3324).

The Council for British Archaeology produces a monthly British Archaeological News (9 issues a year). It gives details of conferences, extra-mural courses, summer schools, training excavations and sites where volunteers are needed. The annual subscription of £7.50 includes postage, and should be made payable to C.B.A., 112 Kennington Road, SE11 6RE (01-582 0494).