

Archæological Notes

ARCHÆOLOGICAL NOTES FROM READING MUSEUM

The following objects have been dredged from the River Thames since August 1957, by the Thames Conservancy Board and added to the loan collection in Reading Museum.

"Tranchet" axe and flint blade, both of Mesolithic type, dredged up together below Mapledurham Lock by A. Lewendon.

Flint blade, 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ " long, found at Tilehurst by R. Phelan. This unusually long blade has been struck from a Mesolithic two-platformed core.

Chipped flint axe of Neolithic form, found at Tilehurst by A. Lewendon. It is a well made implement but no attempt has been made to grind the edge. It is slightly ochrous-stained by the river.

Bronze tanged knife, Late Bronze Age, found below Bell Weir Lock, near Staines, by A. Whitman. The blade is bent and the tip missing, but this damage is ancient. The surface of the metal is well preserved and devoid of patina. (Fig. No. 7).

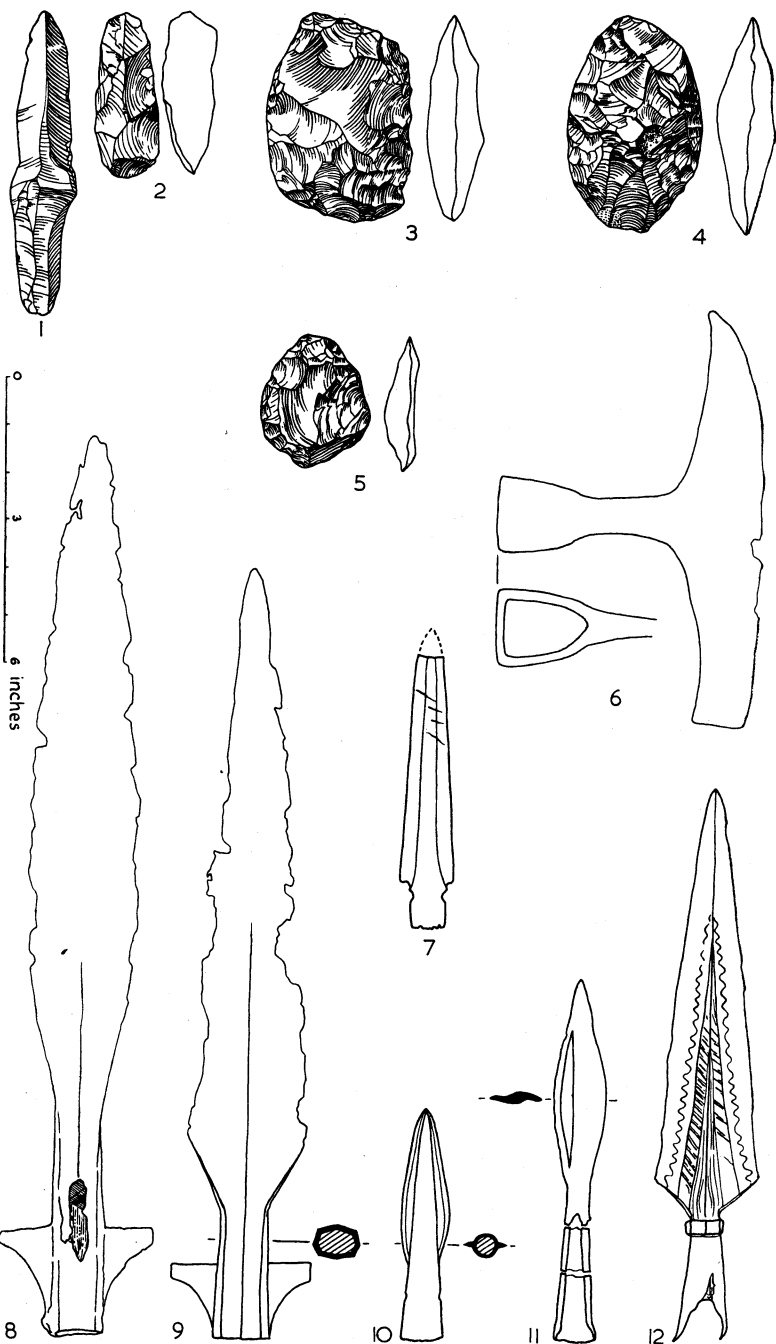
Bronze spearhead, Late Bronze Age, found at Cookham Upper Weir by P. R. Clark. This small, socketed weapon has a smooth, dark green patina and is in excellent condition. There are two rivet holes in the socket but no trace of rivet or shaft (Fig. No. 10).

As, of Hadrian (A.D. 117-138) from Appletree Eyot, Tilehurst. Found by A. Lewendon.

Small, iron spearhead found at Sonning by A. Lewendon. The blade is recessed on each side and the socket is open. The weapon is in poor condition, the socket broken in two places, but complete, and is of distinctive Early Saxon type. (Fig. No. 11).

Iron spearhead of "winged" Carolingian type, 9th-11th century A.D., found by A. Lewendon at Appletree Eyot, Tilehurst. This weapon is badly pitted by corrosion. When cleaned, part of the octagonal socket was found to be corroded right through and an interesting feature was revealed within the socket: the wooden (ash?) shaft was preserved, neatly bound at the upper end with fine hair. (Fig. No. 8).

Iron spearhead of "winged" Carolingian type, 9th-11th century A.D., similar to the one above from Tilehurst, found at Hedsor Wharf, Cookham by P. R. Clark. The upper part is damaged by corrosion but the lower part, the octagonal socket and the wings are in an unusually fine state of preservation and show the high quality of the metal-working. There are only two other examples of this type of "winged" spearhead in the T.C.B. Collection, excluding the one above from Tilehurst, and one of these was also found at Cookham, upstream of the railway bridge. (Fig. No. 9).



Iron spearhead of Viking type, found at Shiplake, by B. Smith. The base of the socket is missing but was evidently closed. The blade is 9" from the junction with the socket to the tip and has a pronounced mid-rib, baluster moulding at the junction of the socket and blade and traces of the wooden shaft remain in the socket.

The blade is elaborately decorated by skilful iron-working. Other spearheads of similar form in the T.C.B. and Museum Collections contain this distinctive feature and a report on them will be forthcoming. (Fig. No. 12).

Iron carpenter's axe of Early Mediaeval type, found at Hedsor Weir by P. R. Clark. (Fig. No. 6).

Base of Pottery Vessel found in association with a collection of bones of deer, horse, ox and pig between Appletree Eyot and Poplar Island, Tilehurst, by K. West. This is the base of an unglazed "sagging base" vessel, c. 12th-13th century.

Iron bill from Appletree Eyot, Tilehurst, found by A. Lewendon. A 16th-18th century date seems most probable.

Since September 1957 the following objects have been brought to the museum for identification and, unless otherwise stated, added to the Collections.

PALÆOLITHIC

Winnersh. A rolled, ochrous, pointed flint hand axe of Acheulian type was found on the surface by Mr. Dickenson, 200 yards South West of Loddonbridge Farm. There is no sign of surface patination and the implement was presumably ploughed up from the gravel beneath.

Taplow. Four mammoth teeth have been dredged from the flood plain gravels of the River Thames in the pit owned by R. S. Prior, South West of Taplow station, also the fragment of a tusk. There are two milk molars, one upper adult and one lower adult molar.

Sonning. A milk molar of a mammoth was found by workmen on the screening plant of the gravel pit worked by Folley Bros. at Sonning Eye.

Henley. By kind permission of Sydney Green and Sons it has been possible to continue observations at the important Palæolithic site at Highlands Farm. Large quantities of gravel have been removed commercially during the last year and several artifacts recovered. It is now clear that several industries are represented, Clactonian being the predominant one and presumably the earliest. The latest industry is typified by a series of small ovates (Fig. No. 5), a cleaver (Fig. No. 3), and a few larger ovates (Fig. No. 4) with 'tranchet'

cutting edges. This industry would appear to be more recent than the Acheulian of Furze Platt, Cookham and the Swanscombe Middle Gravels. The contents of the ancient channel at Highlands are comparable with those from the Boyn Hill Terrace of the Thames (cf. Lacaille, 1939, *Antiquaries Journal*, p. 166 ff.) in spite of its much greater height above the present river level. The majority of the artifacts were found by myself on piles of screened flints, in the scree of the pit face and occasionally in situ. Four ovates were found by Mr. Palmer who operates the mechanical excavator in the pit. A section was cleaned by members of the Berks Field Research Group in August 1958, and the stratification and distribution of artifacts found to be consistent with previous investigations.

Great quantities of this gravel, neither washed nor screened, has been used for making up the runway on Booker airfield and also widening the Wokingham-Bracknell road near the 'Shoulder of Mutton' public house, Binfield. I have found implements on both sites.

Caversham. A small ($3\frac{1}{4}$ "), flat, pointed hand-axe, slightly rolled and patinated, but not gravel-stained, was found in a garden at St. Peter's Avenue, Caversham, by Master Lowe. The type is consistent with the many previous finds from this area.

MESOLITHIC

Thatcham. Excavations have been conducted by Reading and Newbury Museums. The extent of the site and the fortunate preservation of much organic material makes Thatcham one of the most important mesolithic sites in Southern Britain. Several seasons' work is anticipated but an interim report appears in this issue of the *Journal*.

Stanford-in-the-Vale. Nr. Faringdon. Mr. Allaway reported the finding of eight mesolithic blades on ploughed ground West of Stanford-in-the-Vale. These remain in his possession.

Burghfield. A small, flint 'tranchet' axe ($3\frac{1}{2}$ " long) was found on Burghfield Common near Recreation Road by a schoolboy, Duncan Hutchinson, and reported to this museum by his teacher, Miss Tombs, of the Society. The axe is faintly patinated on one face and is made of good quality flint. (Fig. No. 2).

Burghfield. A long flint blade was found in the spoil heaps at Messrs. Hyde Crete's gravel pits at Burghfield by D. Fisher. This is a fine example of a mesolithic blade and most likely came from beneath the holocene flood loams which cap the flood plain gravels of the River Kennet in this district. Bones of ox and antlers of red deer are common at this horizon. (Fig. No. 1).

NEOLITHIC

Crowthorne. A very finely made, thin leaf-shaped arrowhead of brown flint was found in a garden, near Heathlands, by Mr. Land.

Binfield. Major Simonds presented two flint flakes, found in his garden, one having secondary working along part of one edge.

BRONZE AGE

Medmenham. H. M. Slater reported the finding of part of a flat, bronze knife on the S.W. rampart of "Bolebec's Castle" above Medmenham village. It has a lustrous, green patina and the break near the hilt is a recent one. In spite of careful searching, Mr. Slater could not find the hilted end. The broken knife remains in his possession.

ROMAN

Lambourn. A coin of Constantine I (A.D. 306-337), minted at Trier and in fine condition, was picked up in a ploughed field one mile North of Upper Lambourn by Mrs. B. W. Simpson.

Wittenham Clumps. A small bronze awl, probably of Roman date, was found by Dr. Watts. The awl remains in his possession.

Wantage. An *as* of Hadrian (A.D. 117-138) was found by Mr. Barker in his garden at Barwell Road, Wantage. He retains the coin.

Cookham. Excavations in a gravel pit at Cookham, by kind permission of R. S. Prior, have revealed evidence of occupation, ranging from the 1st to 3rd centuries A.D. A very fine well, lined with chalk blocks, has been partly excavated and the filling found to be of Roman date. Near the bottom of the well was the complete skeleton of a piglet and part of a Samian ware base stamped: SACER[(Sacer of Lezoux (?) Trajan-Antonine). There are traces of a hut, in the form of post holes, a probable flint wall and a series of shallow, V-shaped ditches. Much of the pottery is 1st century A.D. and two Hod Hill brooches have been found. Four coins have been found, all in a very poor state of preservation. Dr. Sutherland has confirmed that one is certainly a British "tin coin" of the 1st century B.C.

Work is still in progress (September 1958) and publication will be forthcoming upon its completion.

Sonning Eye. Major Stonor reported the finding of a base fragment of a Roman coarse ware vessel in Folley Bros.' gravel pit. Last year, as reported in the previous Journal (Vol. 56, p. 58), a narrow-necked coarseware jar, probably 2nd century, was found in the pit.

SAXON

Slough. M. Bayley reported the finding of a small, Late Saxon-Viking hunting spear some years ago beside the "Crown" public house at Slough. The spearhead remains in his possession.

MEDIÆVAL

Maidenhead. M. Bayley also reported the finding in his garden of a carpenter's axe. It is a 'bearded' axe derivative (Wheeler's type 1Vb) with a maker's mark, c. 16th century. It remains in his possession.

Sulhamstead. R. Williams reported the finding of a Charles I shilling on a building site at Sulhamstead.

Shinfield. Seven sherds, two of 14th century type ware, were reported by D. Doble from near Shinfield Church, beneath 4 ft. of topsoil. The sherds remain in his possession.

Earley, Reading. F. G. Slade of Tilehurst reported the finding of a glazed earthenware tankard (rim and most of handle missing) containing 41 silver coins while digging trenches on the building site near Hungerford Lodge, Earley. The hoard comprises 15 shillings of Elizabeth I, 8 shillings of James I, a sixpence of James I and 17 shillings of Charles I. This hoard remains in private possession.

J. WYMER.