

# A LATE NEOLITHIC SITE AT SONNING, BERKSHIRE

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## SUMMARY

The unusual and approximately rectangular ditch surrounding the enclosure is of late Neolithic culture, and has its closest parallel in the unique square ditch of the same date at Dorchester on Thames. The absence of domestic remains in the enclosure suggests that it was used for ritual purposes, especially as the ditch was not needed for drainage and was useless for defence. One corner of the ditch was destroyed by the cutting of a linear ditch in Romano-British times.

## *Introduction*

The site is part of a complex situated in Straighthanger Field on the Reading University farm at Sonning (Plate 1). It lies to the east of the present village, between the London Road (A4) and the river Thames, its grid reference being SU 770763. It was unknown until revealed by air photography in the summer of 1959, and a visit to the site then showed the crop marks clearly visible from ground level. The opportunity was taken to place markers before the wheat was harvested, and this enabled much of the complex to be plotted although excavation has been limited to one rectangle. The project was undertaken as part of the co-ordinated plan established by the Berkshire Field Research Group for excavation in this county, and the actual work was done mainly by undergraduates of Reading University. During the three years of this excavation I incurred many debts that it is now a pleasure to acknowledge: to all students who gave voluntarily of their time and especially to Misses Richardson, Patch, Marsh, Knight, Rayson and Stocks who responded far beyond the call of obligation; to Mr. D. B. Connah and the members of the Archaeological Society of Saint Bartholomew's Grammar School, Newbury; to Dr. Cotton, president, and members of the Field Research Group; to Mr. H. W. Copsey for help with flints and for meticulous search over the fields surrounding the site; to Mr. J. J. Wymer of Reading Museum for help in ways too numerous to detail; to Professor Duckham, Professor of Agriculture, and Messrs. Newman and Stansfield, successive managers of the University Farm, for allowing the site to be removed from cultivation for three years; to Messrs. Sheridan and Lingwood for drawing the flints and pottery; to the University of Reading for financing the project; to the Council for British Archaeology for a grant towards the cost of publication. The area excavated has been filled in and has returned to agricultural purposes. The finds from and records of the excavation are in the custody of the Department of History, University of Reading.

## *The Site (fig. 1)*

The complex of which the site is a part lies along the edge of the irregular gravel terrace—the Taplow Terrace—that marks the limit of the flood-plain of the Thames. The river is about half a mile to the north of the site, and a further half mile beyond the river the flood-plain on that side is bounded by the low chalk hills of Oxfordshire. The site is some fifteen feet above the flood-plain into which the gravel sinks in a gentle slope to the north of about 100 yards. To the south the land dips slightly, and likewise to the west after the second rectangle; while to the east a slight break in the

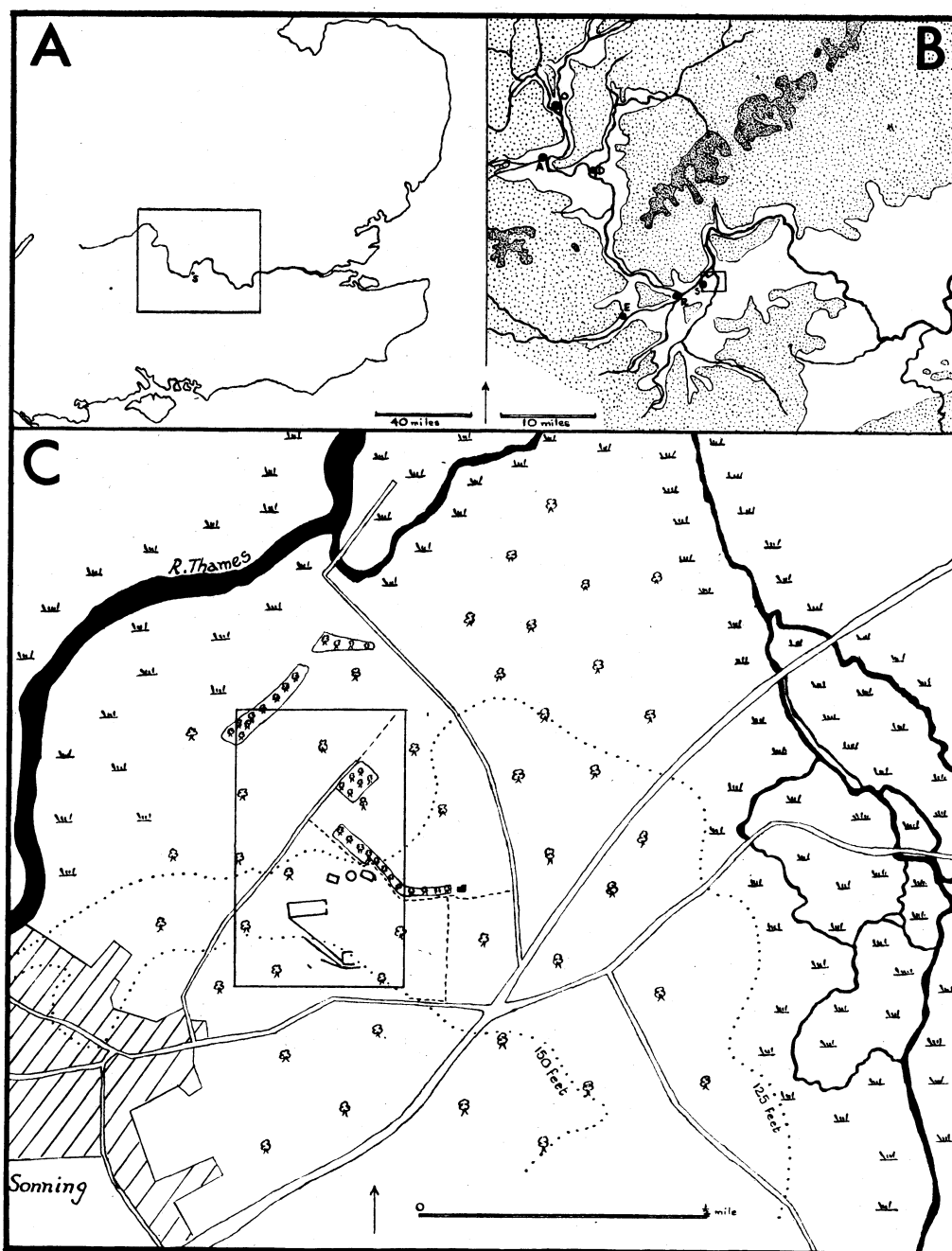


Fig. 1. a. Southern England showing position of map B  
 b. The Middle and Upper Thames Valley showing position of map C. Land over 200 ft. O.D. stippled. O=Oxford, A=Abingdon, D=Dorchester, R=Reading, S=Sonning, E=Englefield.  
 c. The area around the site indicating its timber and marsh potentiality. The inner rectangle encloses the area shown on the aerial photograph in Plate I

gravel is now marked by a thin belt of woodland, beyond which another field regains the height lost. The two rectangles and the circle thus occupy the top of a very slight plateau which, except where trees intervene, is visible from all directions. The large and very regular rectangle appears from its size, shape and lower site to have no connexion with these three features; and nothing can at this stage be said about the rectangle and parallel ditches towards the corner of the field.

The elevated position of the site is against the formation of any great depth of top-soil which, in fact, averaged a mere one foot. It rests on river gravel of medium coarseness and rather dirty, in which there is a scattering of large flints. This is underlain by yellow sand deposited by river action and whose depth below the gravel varies from the occasional two feet to the normal three feet or more: occasionally finer whitish sand replaces the yellow. A few patches of this yellow sand appeared near the surface of the gravel but were found to be of geological rather than archaeological significance. The division between humus and gravel was blurred and over most of the enclosure the former ground surface could not be distinguished. It probably lay only inches below the present, and had thus been destroyed in subsequent agricultural operations. Where the gravel dips on the east side it was probably the top of the layer of reddish-brown earth, but the absence of surface features makes identification uncertain.

A feature of the site is its excellent drainage. Water does not stand even after heavy or prolonged rain, and its height frees it from the flooding that even today is an inescapable feature of the flood-plain in wet weather. The river, of course, can also be regarded as a constant and reasonably close water supply. Trees in the area are confined into small groups or belts, but this is due to human activity; and the area has considerable 'timber-potential' especially in the flood-plain and where the gravel drops. The site is thus a modest and local prominent feature, but one which trees of even moderate height could conceal.

### *Method of Excavation*

The nature of the site virtually dictated the method of excavation. As the crop marks had been established on the ground there was no object in seeking resistivity surveys: as preliminary trenches established a mere foot or less of top-soil the hiring of earth-moving equipment was neither an economic nor, on an unknown site, a safe proposition. Thus, given the privilege of indefinite occupation of the site, the top-soil could be and was moved by voluntary manual labour. To cut down on this labour-consuming operation the system of 9' by 9' boxes and 3' baulks was used over much of the site, larger areas being cleared only for definite reasons, as on the corners of the ditch, where on the east an area of 12' by 15' with an extension was cleared. All clearing below the top-soil was, except in the latest stages of the excavation, done with hand trowels, a situation enforced by the lack of experience of the bulk of those working and by the reluctance of the site to give any clue as to its nature. Work was thus very slow but was meticulously done, and it is most unlikely that anything archaeologically significant was overlooked in the areas cleared. The ditch on the north and west sides of the enclosure presented special problems, for its steep sides

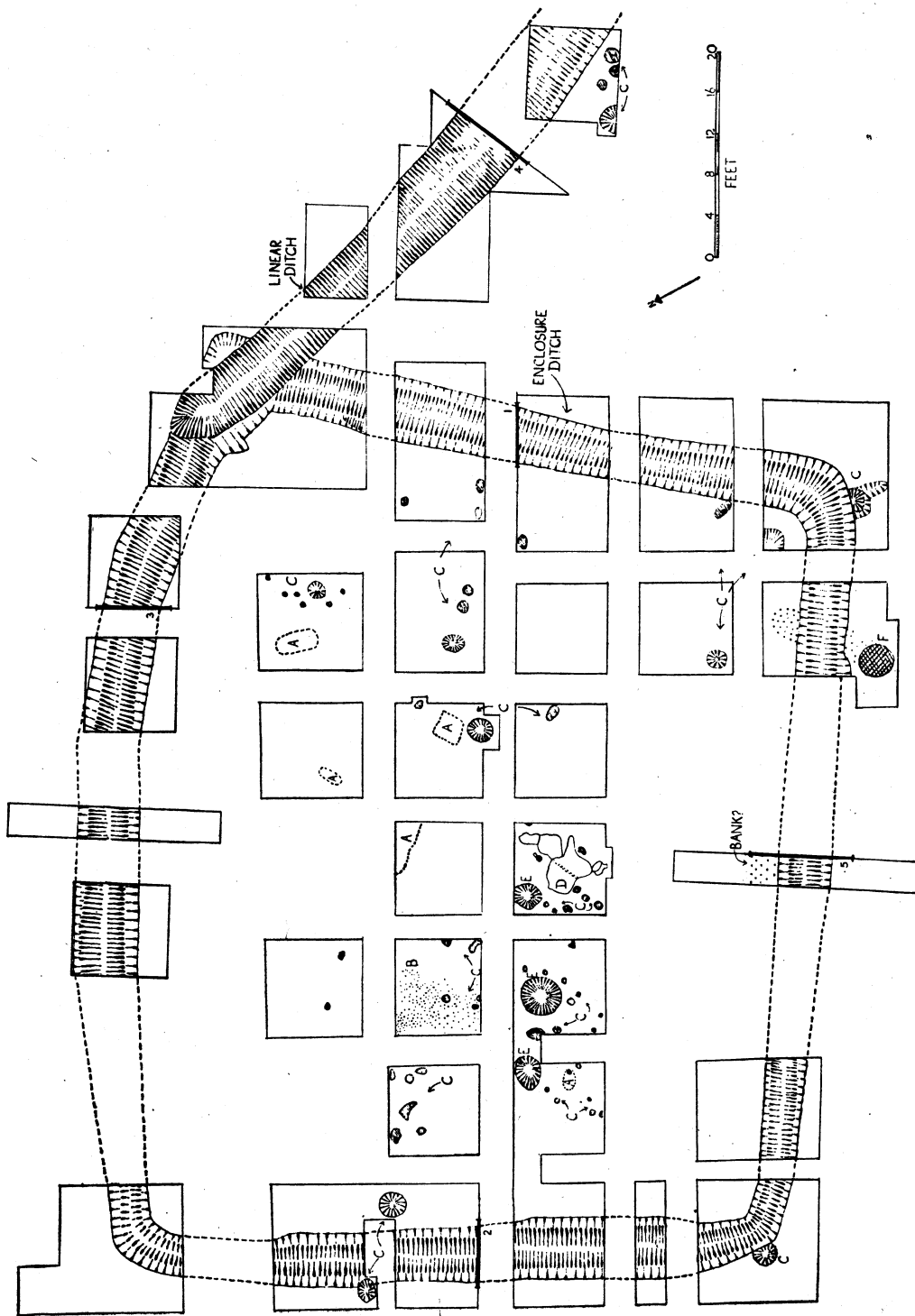


Fig. 2. Plan of Site I, Sonning. The numbered thick black lines refer to the ditch sections shown in Fig. 3. The letters are explained in the text.

had resulted in gravel infall that was indistinguishable from natural gravel. A thin scattering of heat-affected flints indicated the infall, but the best guide to the limit of this was provided by worm holes, the edge at times being marked by a whole series of near-vertical lines. 'Split pea' was sometimes present at the junction of infall and natural, but as it also separated various layers of natural it was of little help. Experience and 'feel' were, in fact, the best guides. It was very difficult, especially on these two sides, to establish the depth of the ditch, and, indeed, the sherd of Peterborough ware (no. 62) came from what could easily have passed as natural gravel.

### *Structural Features*

#### (1) *The Enclosure Ditch* (plates I-II)

The dimensions of this were: east side, 57 ft. 6 in.; south side, 80 ft.; west side, 61 ft.; north side, 47 ft. 6 in. from west to bend, 38 ft. from east to bend. Its diagonals were: N.E. to S.W., 97 ft.; S.E. to N.W., 99 ft. The angles on the corners were slightly obtuse at about 100 degrees; that at the bend of the north side very obtuse at about 170 degrees.

The ditch was fairly uniform in depth at about 4 ft. or just over below the top-soil, except on the N.W. corner where it became  $2\frac{1}{2}$ –3 ft., and on the east side. On the north side it was funnel-shaped with the bottom a flattened U; on the west and south sides it was a broad U with the bottom a shallow curve. The width at the top varied between 5 ft. and 9 ft. (fig. 3, nos. 2, 3, 5) and at the sides of the ditch beyond the ditch filling the gravel began immediately below the top-soil. The east side, lying just off the crest of the plateau, showed on the outer edge about 6 in. of reddish-brown soil between gravel and top-soil and was cut about  $2\frac{1}{2}$ –3 ft. into the gravel. The section here was a broad U with a top width of about 7 ft. (fig. 3, no. 1). The N.W., S.W. and S.E. corners were rounded. The N.E. had been largely destroyed by the cutting of the linear ditch, but the small surviving part of its outer edge indicated that that corner was similar to the others.

The ditch filling on the north, west and south sides was as follows: on the bottom and up the sides to a height of about 2 ft. it consisted of gravel distinguishable from the natural by the reduced number of larger stones in its higher levels; the gravel on the inner side of the ditch was separated from that on the outer by a central 'pipe' of large stones and reddish-brown soil; the top of these fillings marked the attainment of the angle of rest, and the filling thereafter consisted of reddish-brown soil mixed with stones that gave way after some 18 in. to reddish-brown soil, virtually free from stones, that extended to the base of the top-soil (fig. 3, nos. 2, 3, 5). On the east side the whole recognizable filling consisted of reddish-brown soil with few stones (fig. 3, no. 1), but a few flint flakes and heat-affected stones were present near the top of the ostensibly natural gravel in the bottom of the ditch. But the downward drift of heavier objects through the soil might explain this. The direction of infall gave little indication whether there had been an inner or an outer bank. In one area on the south side a layer of large gravel just beyond the inside edge of the ditch suggested a trace of an inside bank. But the surviving width of this layer is too narrow to accommodate all that was dug from the corresponding section of ditch.

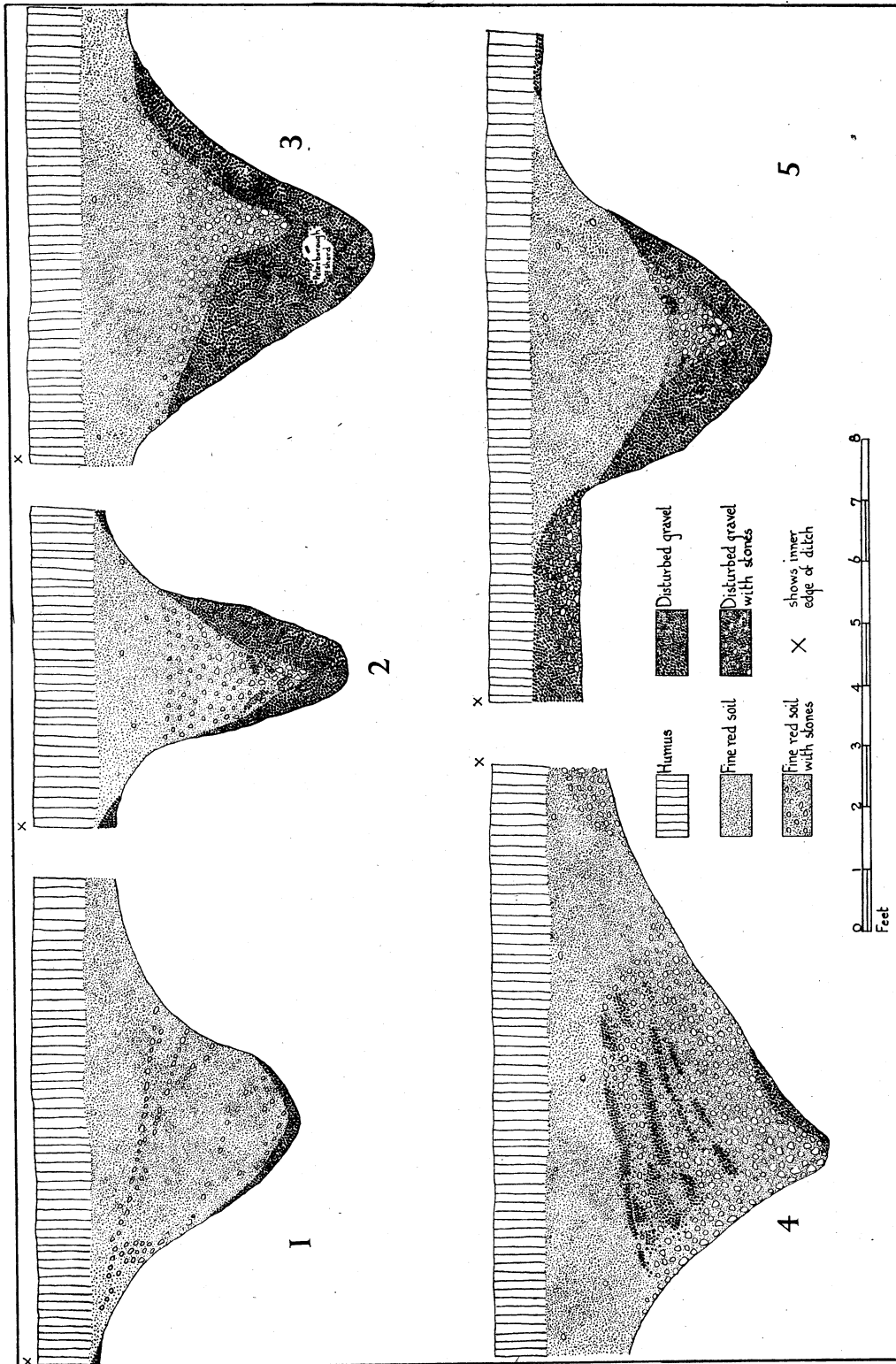


Fig. 3. Sonning. Site I. Ditch sections. The positions of the sections are shown by the numbers on the plan, Fig. 2.

A number of flint flakes and a piece of Peterborough rim<sup>1</sup> were found in the primary silt; in the secondary silt a number of flint flakes and cores and a few fragments and crumbs of pottery whose fabric was suggestive of neolithic. The top of the ditch filling gave flint flakes and a few fragments of pottery ranging from Romano-British to modern. All levels gave flecks of charcoal and a scatter of heat-affected and burnt flints.

(2) *Features inside the Enclosure*

There were five classes of these and they are indicated on the plan under the letters below.

A. Five irregular shallow depressions whose sizes varied from roughly 4 ft. by 2 ft. to 1 ft. 6 in. by 1 ft. They were filled with reddish soil and large stones that merged into the natural gravel. In the filling was a thin scatter of heat-affected flints, but it was otherwise sterile.

B. An irregular patch of chocolate-coloured soil about one inch thick and resting on the natural gravel. Its dimensions were approximately 8 ft. by 9 ft., and it contained charcoal fragments, a few nails and small unidentifiable iron objects (nos. 84-8) and three small sherds, two of Romano-British pottery (no. 72), one possibly medieval (no. 73).

C. A number of holes that varied in depth from 6 in. to 2 ft. 6 in. and in diameter from 6 in. to 2 ft. The filling from the top consisted of reddish-brown soil virtually free from stones, followed by very dirty gravel that merged into the natural. The proportions of the two filling materials varied from hole to hole. Three of the holes occurred in the sides of the ditch.

D. An irregular pit (plate III) containing gravel stained in places with iron oxide. Mixed with the gravel were a large number of fragile fragments of bone, too small for identification as human or animal. There were some twenty rounded pieces of chalk at the bottom of the pit, and the sides were marked by a thin vertical layer of grey.

E. Three large holes measuring 2 ft. 6 in. or more across and 3 ft. deep. These contained about one foot of reddish-brown soil virtually free from stones, resting on gravel that only worm-casts differentiated from natural. All three had very thin layers of grey on parts of the sides, and a flint flake was found low down in the one nearest the western side of the enclosure (no. 13).

(3) *The 'Fire Hole' (marked F on the plan)*

This had been dug into the gravel near the ditch edge on the south just outside the enclosure, and formed a circular pit 3 ft. in diameter and 2 ft. deep. It contained a quantity of heat-affected and burnt flints and soil and a number of small pieces of charcoal; the entire contents, in fact, showed the effect of considerable heat. The most careful search and sifting failed to disclose any fragments of pottery or organic material. The enclosure ditch cut through the spoil thrown out when the hole was dug.

<sup>1</sup>I owe this identification to Professor Stuart Piggott.

(4) *The Linear Ditch*

This ran from the N.E. corner of the enclosure ditch in a south-easterly direction. Growing crops rendered further immediate excavation impossible, and the increasing depth of soil over the ditch as it headed towards the declivity precluded cropmarks. It was about a foot deeper than the ditch on the eastern side of the enclosure through which, on the N.E. corner, it had been cut, the cutting destroying the inner side of the enclosure ditch at this point. The ditch filling consisted of reddish-brown soil with varying amounts of gravel infall that increased as the southern limit of excavation was approached (fig. 3, no. 4). The direction of infall suggested that at least some of the spoil had been placed on the west side of the ditch; but even the very slight slope would have inclined any banked on the east to fall away from rather than into the ditch. In the ditch filling, in addition to the usual scatter of heat-affected flints and flecks of charcoal, were a number of flint flakes and a few implements concentrated in the north-west end where it was in closest relation to the enclosure and its ditch (nos. 1-6); a few fragments of pottery showing Neolithic characteristics (nos. 57-60); a scatter of Romano-British pottery including half a dozen sherds of colour-coated ware of the 3rd to 4th centuries A.D. (nos. 45-56); and a few metal objects (nos. 77, 80-3). A smaller ditch had at some stage been cut through the upper part of the ditch filling.

*Interpretation and Discussion*

The site resolved itself into two basic features, the enclosure and its ditch and the linear ditch; and excavation showed that their relationship was fortuitous. The considerable number of flint artifacts in the linear ditch were distributed unevenly, the bulk being in the later infall, above the scatter of sherds of Romano-British pottery. That pottery, the cow-bones, the hobnails and the oxgoad suggest the ordinary routine of a modest domestic and agricultural life, and the sherds of colour-coated ware show that the ditch was open in the 3rd and 4th centuries A.D. It probably formed some sort of boundary. The standard of life seems like that at Lowbury in the Berkshire Downs, to whose enclosure the large unexcavated rectangle at Sonning is very similar.<sup>1</sup>

The finds from the enclosure ditch, from the lower part of the disturbed interior of the enclosure and from the later infall of the linear ditch formed a virtually homogeneous collection, consisting of a very little pottery and a large number of flints. The one certainly identifiable sherd was a piece of Peterborough rim (no. 62) found low in the ditch on the north side, but other fragments and a number of crumbs of pottery (nos. 57-60, 63-8) were Neolithic in texture and appearance. The flints numbered over 500. Of those with distinctive features four (nos. 2, 3, 24, 29) were Mesolithic or Neolithic; four flakes struck by barhammer technique (nos. 15, 21, 31) were Neolithic or early Bronze Age; and three, the fabricator (no. 14), the saw (no. 4) and the incomplete arrow-head (no. 42) were distinctively Neolithic. The remainder, apart from a few cores, consisted of flakes of various sizes, some showing considerable

<sup>1</sup>*The Romano-British Site on Lowbury Hill in Berkshire*: D. Atkinson: University College, Reading; 1916.



wear on the edges. There was, in fact, a crude but distinct 'blade-element' about the flakes and this is a feature of the flints found in the excavation of a ring ditch at Englefield, Berkshire, on a site that gave more than 200 sherds of Neolithic pottery.<sup>1</sup> Comparative dating thus supports the intrinsic dating of the Sonning enclosure which must be regarded as late Neolithic.

The noteworthy feature of the enclosure is the absence of domestic debris, especially of the scrapers that are so characteristic of any Neolithic domestic site; and their absence from the enclosure is emphasized by the finding of 24 in the surrounding fields (Appendix). The fragments of pottery are too few to indicate domestic occupation; the absence of any pattern of post-holes rules against the existence of huts; there were no bones in the ditch although some traces might have been expected to survive in spite of the acidity of the filling; and the ditch was continuous, although far too narrow for a defensive obstacle and, as has been said, not needed for drainage. This would suggest that the enclosure was constructed for ritual purposes. The many fragments of bone, one of which was burnt, found in the irregular pit (D), and the very thin layer of ash from this and from the three large holes (E) may show some evidence of funerary rites, although the absence of dating evidence apart from one indeterminate flint flake (no. 13) leaves it only as a very strong presumption that these are contemporary with the ditch. Nothing in the nature of a burial was found in the area excavated or indicated elsewhere in the air photographs. The other features of the enclosure give little positive information. The irregular shallow depressions (A) are probably not natural, judging by their filling. The thin irregular patch (B) possibly indicates a very temporary occupation level of Romano-British or medieval times if we accept the undistinguished sherds (nos. 72, 73) and the fragments of iron (nos. 84-8) as being *in situ*; but there is nothing in the way of post-holes to show a structure of any substance. Many of the holes (C) are undoubtedly the relics of vegetation and the three in the sides of the ditch suggest medium-sized trees; but those in proximity to the centre one of the large holes (E) (plate IV) and to the irregular pit (D) may indicate some kind of temporary flimsy structures—possibly supports for light platforms—needed in connexion with any presumed funerary rites. Knapping was, however, practised either in the enclosure or in its vicinity for the north side of the ditch produced two fitting flakes (no. 16), the south-west corner four fitting flakes (no. 33).

The closest parallel to this enclosure ditch is the square ditch of Site I at Dorchester on Thames which the authors of the report on that site noted as "unique among the ritual monuments of the Neolithic and Bronze Ages of the British Isles".<sup>2</sup> There are, however, certain differences between Sonning and Dorchester:

1. The ditch at Sonning is generally 1 ft. to 1 ft. 6 in. deeper than that at Dorchester.
2. The north side of the enclosure at Sonning is irregular. This may be due to faulty marking-out or, more likely, to faulty digging.

<sup>1</sup>Excavated at Easter 1963 and not yet published. I owe this information and the chance of inspecting the finds to the kindness of Mr. Wymer.

<sup>2</sup>*Excavations at Dorchester, Oxon*: R. J. C. Atkinson, C. M. Piggott and N. K. Sandars; Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; 1951, pp. 8, 12-14.

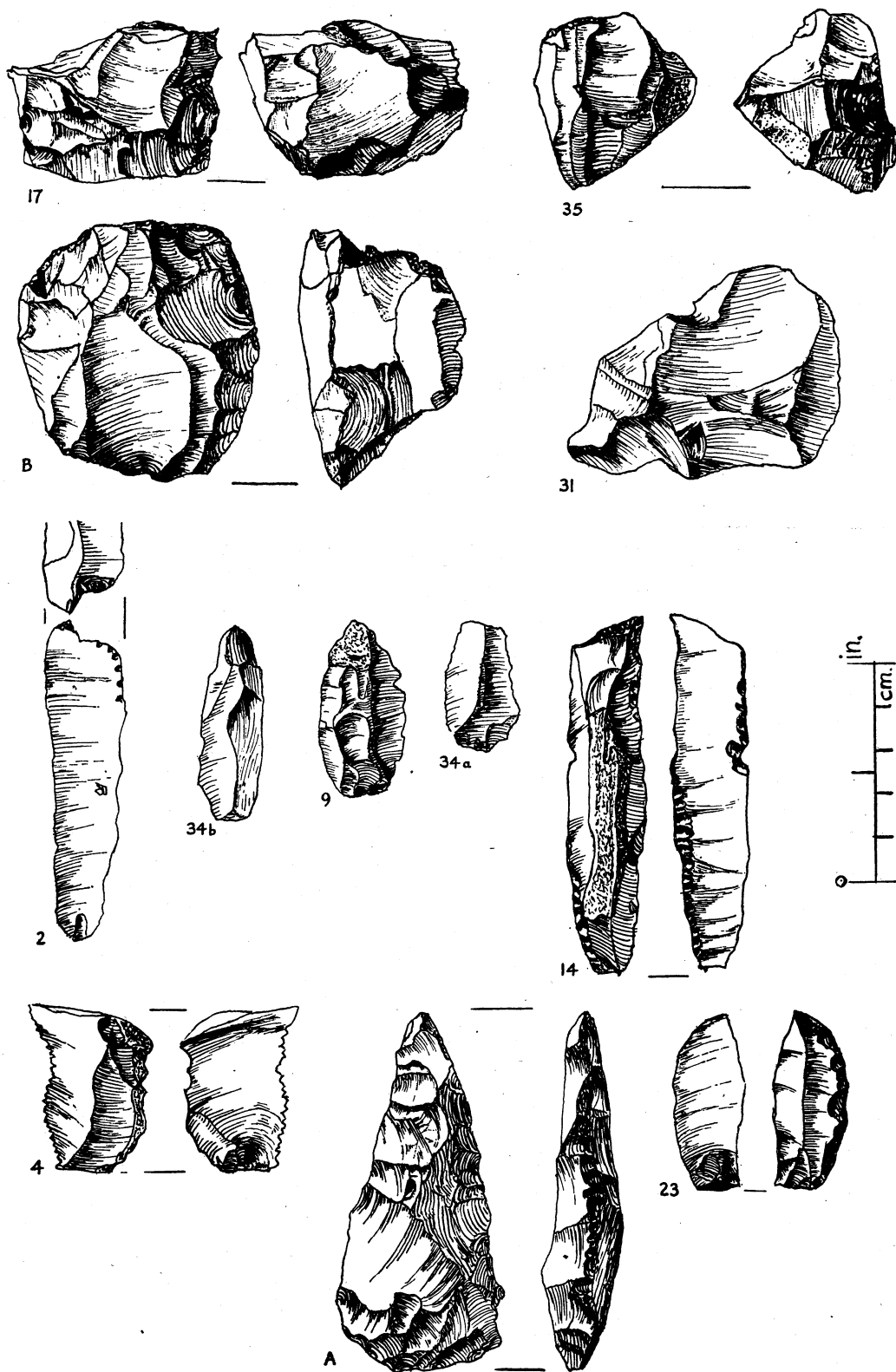


Fig. 4. Sonning. Flint artifacts. A is the celt-like implement, B the fine discoidal core from the surrounding fields (see Appendix). The remainder are numbered as in the list of finds.

3. There is nothing comparable with the Dorchester circle and burials within the area enclosed.

But similarity in the general concept would seem to be more important than differences, and there are other interesting parallels with the Dorchester site in the cursus, the large rectangle (c.f. Dorchester VIII) and the circle (c.f. Dorchester VII).<sup>1</sup> How far the parallels really go will await the publication of the second volume of the Dorchester report and the progress of further excavation at Sonning. But the evidence already to hand at least suggests that we have either a record of the movements of one group or that there were, in this section of the middle Thames, two groups with similar unusual practices.

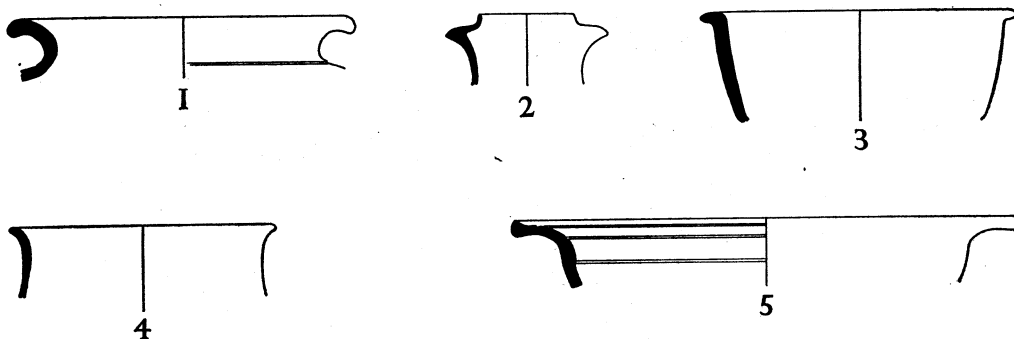


Fig. 5. Sonning. Romano-British pottery from the linear ditch. ( $\frac{1}{4}$  scale)

#### LIST OF FINDS

##### FLINT

##### (a) *From the Linear Ditch*

1. Piece of fine-grained freestone, c.  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in. by  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in. by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. This was the only non-flint stone among the finds and was quite foreign to the site. It is probably part of a quern.
2. Slender patinated flake, pointed at one end and showing signs of use; Mesolithic or late Neolithic (fig. 4).
3. Two-edged, truncated blade  $\frac{7}{10}$  in. long; Mesolithic or late Neolithic.
4. Saw-blade; the teeth are carefully impressed, but the implement shows no sign of use; late Neolithic type (fig. 4).
5. Flake of unusually white lustrous flint.
6. 134 flint flakes varying in length from  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. to 3 in.; a very few show signs of slight use.

<sup>1</sup>It is an interesting coincidence that the north-east corners of both enclosures are cut by later ditches.

(b) *From the Enclosure*

7. Double-ended scraper,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. by  $\frac{3}{8}$  in.; its worn appearance suggests a period of exposure on the surface; probably Mesolithic.

8. 2 rough cores.

9. 35 flakes, one of which is illustrated (fig. 4, no. 9).

Nos. 7-9 were found in the layer of reddish-brown soil towards the eastern side of the enclosure.

10. Single platform core of pyramid shape; the sharp end shows signs of wear.

11. Small core; natural parallel surfaces with flakes struck off all round.

12. 12 flakes.

Nos. 10-12 were found in the layer of decayed gravel that covered most of the enclosure.

13. Flake from bottom of large hole (E) nearest the western side of the enclosure; it is the size and shape of a rough arrow-head, but a considerable amount of cortex remains on one side, and any work on it ceased in the early stages.

(c) *From the Enclosure Ditch*

## North side

14. Fabricator; Neolithic (fig. 4).

15. Flake struck by bar-hammer technique; Neolithic or early Bronze Age.

16. 2 contiguous flakes from same core.

17. Rough double-platform core (fig. 4).

18. 360 flint flakes.

19. Core; secondary Neolithic.

20. 11 flint flakes.

Nos. 19-20 were found on the north side of the ditch just outside the enclosure.

## East side

21. 2 flakes struck by bar-hammer technique; Neolithic to early Bronze Age.

22. Burnt flake.

23. Backed flake (fig. 4).

24. Flake struck off two-platform core; Mesolithic to Neolithic.

25. 40 flint flakes.

## South side

26. Small single-platform core.

27. Two-platform core.

28. 39 flint flakes.

## West side

29. Worked flake, its condition suggesting a period of exposure; roughly pointed; Mesolithic to secondary Neolithic.

30. Large heavy flake, possibly Palaeolithic.

31. Flake struck by bar-hammer technique; Neolithic to early Bronze Age (fig. 4).

32. Rough two-platform core.

33. 4 contiguous flakes struck from same core.

34. 70 flint flakes. One blade-like and one thicker are illustrated as typical of many on the site (fig. 4, nos. 34a, 34b).

(d) *From the Topsoil*

35. 6 single-platform cores, one of which is illustrated (fig. 4).
36. Two-platform core.
37. Hammer stone.
38. Angle graver.
39. Hollow scraper.
40. Flake worked on one face.
41. Flake showing considerable use.
42. Flake with shallow flaking; probably part of unfinished and broken arrowhead; Neolithic.
43. Burnt flake.
44. 118 flint flakes.

## POTTERY

(a) *From the Linear Ditch*

45. 4 pieces of rim of shallow bowl of red colour-coated ware; 3rd to 4th century A.D. (fig. 5, no. 5).
46. Small part of raised base of bowl and small part of side; the fabric of these is identical with that of no. 45, and possibly formed part of the same vessel although found 30 feet away.
47. Part of top of vessel of light brown colour-coated ware; 3rd to 4th century A.D. (fig. 5, no. 2).
48. Part of rim and side of bowl of coarse dark buff ware containing a few micaceous grits; small flattened rim and slight evidence of carination; light trellis pattern on outside; c.f. *Lowbury* p. 63, no. 27, where dated 2nd to 4th century (fig. 5, no. 3).
49. Part of rim of jar of coarse hard grey ware; curved rim and short neck with small horizontal groove; a slight sagging in the rim shows careless manufacture; 1st to 4th century A.D. (fig. 5, no. 1).
50. 2 pieces of rim and three small sherds of wide-mouthed jar; hard grey ware; 1st to 4th century A.D. (fig. 4, no. 4).
51. Piece of rim of large jar; coarse grey ware; 1st to 4th century A.D.
52. Sherd of coarse grey ware with two girth grooves; 1st to 4th century A.D.
53. Small fragment of rim of jar; grey ware with groove on neck; 1st to 4th century A.D.
54. 9 small separate fragments from different vessels; their fabric suggests Belgic or Romano-British coarse ware.
55. Sherd from side of jar or bowl; buff coloured with carination and girth groove; probably 1st to 3rd century A.D.
56. 2 small sherds; thin red ware with slight surface gritting; probably 1st to 4th century A.D.
57. 9 fragments of flint gritted ware, including one small rim sherd; some are weathered; all have the texture and appearance of Windmill Hill ware, but similar sherds have been found on later sites in the Reading area.
58. 2 sherds, probably from same vessel; black with many small grits; prehistoric.

- 59. 10 small and very weathered fragments probably from same vessel; dark brown and slightly gritted; prehistoric.
- 60. Fragment soft and badly weathered; buff clay over black; prehistoric.
- 61. 3 medieval sherds, two from same vessel.

(b) *From the Enclosure Ditch*

- 62. Sherd of Peterborough ware including part of rim with finger-nail decoration; medium brown clay over dark brown and containing a few flint grits of varying sizes; in primary silt of ditch on north side of enclosure (fig. 6, no. A).
- 63. 5 small sherds of softish slightly gritted ware; light buff clay over blackish showing the folding characteristic of Peterborough ware; one sherd shows part of a lug; from south-west corner of ditch.
- 64. Small rim sherd of soft black ware with a thin layer of dark buff on both sides; part of small open bowl; both sides show grass impressions; possibly Windmill Hill; from the ditch on the north side of the enclosure.
- 65. Small sherd of brown clay over red with flint gritting; possibly Windmill Hill; from ditch on north side of enclosure.
- 66. Fragment similar to no. 63; from ditch on eastern side of enclosure.
- 67. A number of crumbs of brown ware with small grits; prehistoric; from south-west corner of ditch.
- 68. 4 fragments of soft red ware over black with flint gritting; from the top of the ditch filling on north side of enclosure; prehistoric.
- 69. 2 sherds of black gritted ware; hard and coarse; 1st to 4th century A.D.; from the top of the ditch filling in the south-east corner.
- 70. Small fragment of hard red ware; 1st to 4th century A.D.; from top of ditch filling on the south side of the enclosure.
- 71. 3 medieval sherds; on top of the ditch filling.

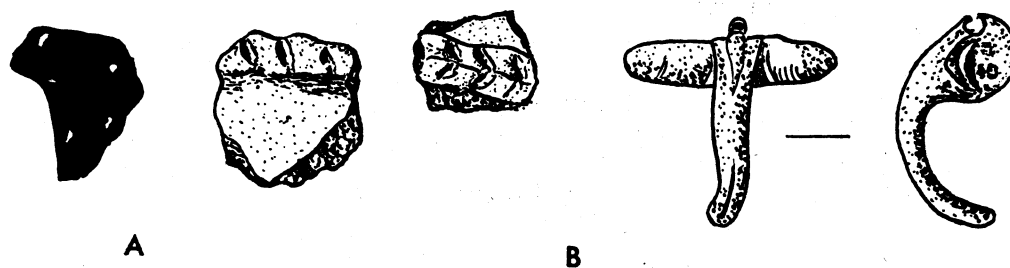


Fig. 6. a. Sherd of Peterborough ware (no. 62)  
 b. Bronze brooch stem (no. 78)  
 Both actual size

(c) *From the Enclosure*

- 72. 2 fragments hard grey ware; 1st to 4th century A.D.; near occupation area B.
- 73. Fragment of red ware; dating uncertain but possibly medieval; from occupation area B.
- 74. 6 medieval sherds.

(d) *From the Topsoil*

- 75. c. 150 sherds extending from modern to unidentified prehistoric, the bulk being medieval and early modern.
- 76. Sherd very similar to no. 63; probably Peterborough ware.

## METAL

## Bronze

(a) *From the Linear Ditch*

- 77. Thin strip  $\frac{7}{16}$  in. long.

(b) *From the Humus*

- 78. Bow of brooch; very curved with side-wings: it resembles Colchester types IIIA and B (Camulodunum, 1st Report, Hawkes and Hull, p. 310 and Pls. xc and xci); 1st century A.D. (fig. 6).
- 79. Semicircular strip broken at both ends; the cross-section is  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. in diameter, and the complete object would form a ring of 4 in. diameter; possibly a bangle.

## Iron

(a) *From the Linear Ditch*

- 80. Oxgoad; c.f. *Lowbury*, p. 52, no. 38.
- 81. 2 hobnails; c.f. *Lowbury*, p. 52, no. 40.
- 82. Head and part of stem of a nail.
- 83. 3 small unidentified objects.

(b) *From the Enclosure*

- 84. 4 nails.
- 85. 3 blade-like objects c. 1 in. long.
- 86. 10 very small fragments.
- 87. Nail.
- 88. Small unidentified object.

Nos. 84-6 came from occupation area B; nos. 87-8 from close by.

(c) *From the Humus*

- 89. 2 blades, 1 hook, several nails and unidentified objects.

## BONES

(a) *From the Linear Ditch*

- 90. Part of cow's skeleton; the majority of the bones and teeth found were near the north end of the ditch; others, belonging to this or to similar animals, were thinly scattered along the ditch.

(b) *From the Enclosure*

91. A number of small fragile fragments mixed with gravel; it was impossible to identify the individual bones or whether they were human or animal; from the irregular pit D.

92. 3 small but well preserved fragments; in occupation area B.

93. 6 small pieces reasonably preserved; in reddish-brown soil near edge of ditch on east side of enclosure.

## APPENDIX

## SURFACE FLINTS FROM SONNING

H. W. COPSEY

Since September 1960 a number of flint artifacts have been collected from the ploughed surfaces surrounding Site I. Apart from the core tools these artifacts comprise flakes, or modifications of such, and the cores from which they have been struck. A variety of flint was employed that was probably derived from the underlying gravel; and from a total of 249 objects 7 are patinated. The cores total 32, the majority being small in size with from one to four striking platforms. One shows a chopper-like edge resulting from the removal of flakes in two directions. Another, after the preparation of two striking platforms and the removal of a poor flake, had apparently been discarded. The four discoidal cores include a good example (fig. 4, B). The core tools comprise a bifacial pointed implement and a well-made small celt-like implement  $4\frac{1}{4}$  in. long (fig. 4, A). Finally, there are three flints that have been prepared and used as hammers.

The flakes total 188 with four of them showing signs of use, and two having double notches worked from the same face. There are in addition a borer pointed by secondary flaking on opposite surfaces, two outer flakes probably used for some immediate purpose and a flake with a single notch. The 24 scrapers were all made on flakes and comprise one hollow scraper, one end scraper on a long flake, and 22 round to oval in shape. A number of these 22 retain a certain amount of cortex and three are on outer flakes; one has the secondary flaking on the bulbar end, the bulb being removed by flaking.

The flints were scattered over the whole area and no concentration has been found. Many of the tools could be Neolithic or Bronze Age, but occupation in late Neolithic times is suggested by the notched flakes and the discoidal cores.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the above two Palaeolithic flakes, a very rough core, and 2 damaged Acheulian pointed hand-axes have been recovered from the surface; and, at the other end of the temporal scale, a well-preserved gun-flint.

<sup>1</sup>*Proc. prehist. Soc.* XXVI (1960), pp. 291-6.