

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES FROM READING MUSEUM

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During the period January–December, 1968, the following objects or sites were brought to the notice of Reading Museum. The objects, unless otherwise stated, have been added to the Museum Collections and the accession number is given in brackets after each entry.

PALAEOLITHIC

Woodley and Sandford A further hand-axe has been found in a gravel pit at East Park Farm. See *Berkshire Archaeological Journal* Vol. 63 p. 67. (7:68).

MESOLITHIC

Wokingham The following note is contributed by J. J. Wymer, F.S.A.: The seven flint artifacts illustrated overleaf were found by Miss A. M. Monnom during the last few years in the course of digging her garden at Folly Thatch Cottage, Barkham Road (SU 794679). The garden is situated just above the 225 ft O.D. contour, on the top of a slight spur of a slope facing south. The Geological Survey map shows Plateau Gravel on Lower Bagshot Beds. The flints comprise:

1. Oblique angle graver made on a thick blade of grey, cherty flint. Signs of wear along parts of the edges of the blade.
2. Blade of grey-brown lustrous flint with negligible striking platform. Signs of use or secondary working along part of one edge.
3. Blade failure with two small notches punched out on one edge and slight signs of use on the other.
4. Small blade failure, differing from the other flints in being patinated a pale blue to white.
5. Small, natural chunk of flint with signs of chipping round most of the edges. Possibly a crude end-scraper.
6. Crude, straight-ended scraper of grey-brown lustrous flint.
7. Transverse core rejuvenation flake. Signs of

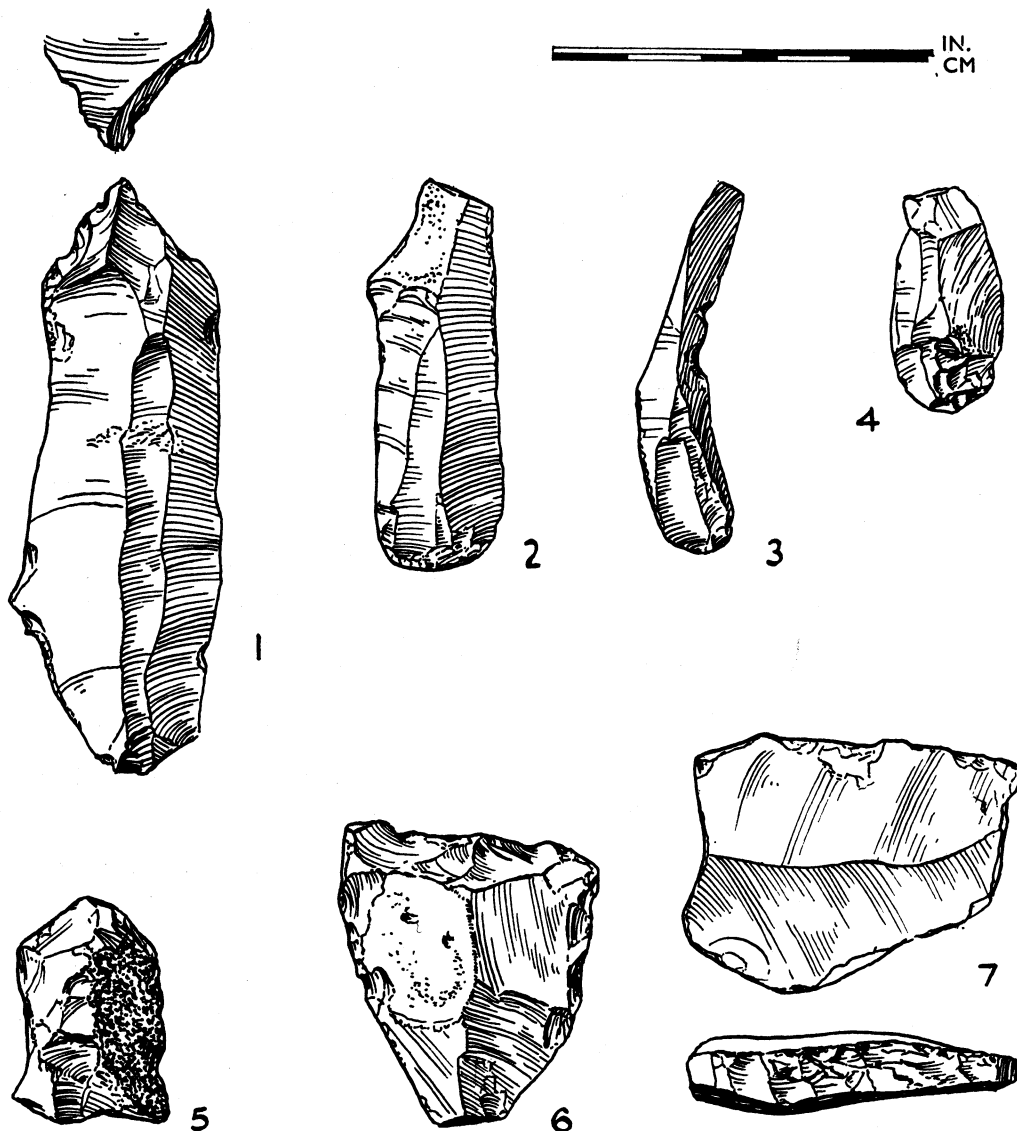
use or secondary working on the sharp edge.

The blades and the core rejuvenator are from a Mesolithic industry, and the scraper and other piece probably belong by association. Miss Monnom states that she found these flints when double-digging, and that they lay at the junction with the sandy sub-soil.

Flint artifacts of any industry are very rare in this district, on the southern edge of Windsor Forest. The only other Mesolithic sites known are at Winkfield and Camberley. Peake records the former in his *Archaeology of Berkshire*, p. 27, as being on the banks of the Blackmore Stream, between Ascot Place and Brookside. A few flints were found by pupils of Ascot Heath School and Peake compared them to Mesolithic flints from Thatcham and Greenham. Unfortunately they are no longer at the school and are lost. Material from the other site at Camberley is preserved in Reading University Archaeology Museum and includes a tranche axe, two microliths, blades, flakes and cores. They were found on Barossa Common (around SU 872614) in low-lying ground close to a small channel which drains into the Wish Stream, and recorded by Cooper King in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* for 1873 (Vol. 2, 368, pl. XXI).

The distance up the valley of the Blackwater to the rich Mesolithic areas of Farnham and the Surrey Weald is a short one. The sandy heaths from Bagshot to Crowthorne and beyond were probably relatively open in Mesolithic times, compared to Windsor Forest, and may have tempted hunters to make occasional forays over them. The Ascot and

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES



Wokingham sites support this and, although it is no more than a subjective observation, the grey cherty flint, and the grey-brown lustrous flint, of the Wokingham artifacts are typical of the flint commonly used in Mesolithic industries of the Surrey Weald.

The flints have been retained by the finder.

NEOLITHIC

Arborfield A chipped flint hoe was found on the east bank of the Loddon (SU 737673). (264:68).

Moulsford A broken ground stone axe was found in the garden of 5 Meadow Close. It remains in private hands.

Reading A ground stone axe, $3\frac{3}{16}$ in. long and just over 2 in. wide at the blade, of heavily weathered igneous rock was dug up in the garden of 72 Tilehurst Road, and retained by the finder.

Silchester (Hants) A ground stone axe was dug up in a potato patch at Three Ashes (SU 638631) several years ago. It is grey-green with a rough surface. The axe remains in private hands.

Woodley and Sandford A flint leaf-shaped point was found in the garden of 15 St. Patrick's Avenue, Charvil. It is just over 3 in. long with the tip broken and resembles the laurel-leaves from Hurst Fen, Mildenhall. (*Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* Vol. XXVI, 1960, p. 221). A search of the garden's surface failed to reveal anything of interest. (21:68).

BRONZE AGE

Reading An Early Bronze Age decorated axe, listed by Megaw and Hardy (*Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, New Series, Vol. IV, 1938, p. 299, no. 13), has been given to the Museum by the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum, where it is recorded as having been found near Reading in 1850. It is of their type IIIc. (14:68).

IRON AGE

Hungerford Two bag-shaped pits were revealed in building a new road on Church Way Estate (SU 333680). One, 18 to 20 in. in diameter and 20 in. deep produced about ten sherds of gritty pottery. The other was 15 in. in diameter and 10 in. deep. They were partly excavated by hand and the rest bulldozed away before further investigation was possible. (158:68).

Maidenhead A collection of pottery was recovered from a round-bottomed pit approximately 3 ft in diameter in the pit of the Summerlease Gravel Company. Several vessels were represented, including a situla with finger-

impressed ornament on the rim and a small bowl with omphalos base, all in coarse flint-gritted ware. (36:68).

ROMAN

Abingdon During August and September 1968 the Abingdon and District Archaeological Society held its first excavation under the direction of Mrs E. Harris on a site made available by the Abingdon Borough Council on the Tithe Farm Estate, west of Drayton Road (A34) at SU 485963. The initial excavation took place in the garden of Plot 324 Masfield Crescent and cut into a rubbish pit and part of a ditch containing 3rd-4th century pottery, three coins of similar date, a considerable quantity of roofing and flue tile fragments, traces of copper working, a cosmetic spoon and a tiny fragment of gold foil. Rain prevented the complete clearance of the ditch section and work was then undertaken on the examination of two pieces of Roman walling revealed on the neighbouring plot (325) by the cutting of a drainage trench. These proved to be the north and south walls of a rectangular structure completely open on its east side and some 12 by 6 ft (interior measurement). Against the inside of the west wall was a well constructed brick pier with, some 6 in. in front of it, a plaster setting? for a second pier. The three walls survived to a height of approximately 18 in. and were set into a low natural gravel bank which gave way to sand at floor level. The structure contained a large quantity of building material, including a fragment of a small column base and pieces of shaped coarse plaster, potsherds of 3rd-4th century date and some half dozen bone hairpins.

Cookham With the aid of a grant from the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works, Members of the Middle Thames Archaeological Society, under the direction of Mrs. J. A. Greenaway of Reading Museum excavated a site in the Strand Castle gravel pit (SU 885841) made available by Mr. R. S. Prior. The site revealed a complex of post holes, ditches and gullies, 2 possible huts and a rectangular drying

oven. Pottery ranged in date from the first to fourth centuries A.D. A full report will be published later.

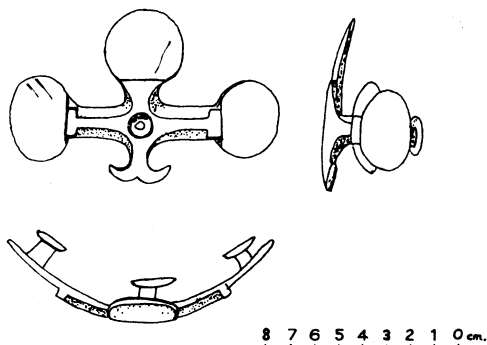
Didcot A quantity of Roman pottery, including part of a small indented beaker of New Forest ware has been found in a field behind Didcot Church (SU 520905). The pottery remains in private hands.

Silchester A number of objects have been picked up within the walls at Silchester and brought into Reading Museum for identification. These consisted chiefly of pottery (including the stamps on samian of PATERAT and MAL] LIACI.F.) and coins, chiefly of 3rd and 4th century date. The two most interesting objects found were:

1. An iron axe (catalogue number 07323) of mid 4th century date.
2. A Roman bronze spur of rare pattern found by Lt. Col. A. W. Tyler and at present on loan to Reading Museum.

The following note concerning the spur is contributed by Mr. G. C. Boon, F.S.A.:

In 1968, Colonel A. W. Tyler showed at Reading Museum a Roman bronze spur of rare pattern, which he had picked up within the walls of Silchester. The spur measures 53 mm across the arms and 35 mm in overall height: the form is sufficiently indicated in the drawing below. We may merely note the traces of



iron-staining around the central conical perforation, which suggest that the missing

prick was of that metal. There is also some sign of wear. Both the standard works on spurs, Zschille-Forrer, *Der Sporn in seiner Formen-Entwicklung* (1891) and M. Jahn, *Der Reitersporn* (Mannus-Bibliothek no. 21, 1921) are now of course very old, but retain their full value in default of a general modern treatment of the subject. For the Roman period, however, Mr H. de S. Shortt's discussion of a provincial Roman spur found at Longstock (Hants) in *Antiq. Journ.* XXXIX, 61 ff., supplies a critical view. Shortt illustrates several spurs which have affinities with the new Silchester specimen. They have arms which terminate in discs with studs at the back, but there is a hook above the prick instead of a third disc (*op. cit.* fig. 2, nos. 3, 4, 28, and an eccentric one, no. 13; fig. 3, nos. 7-12). To these may be added a rather imperfect iron specimen from Silchester in Reading Museum, which may also have been of the eccentric pattern—i.e., with one arm shorter than the other. These spurs are assigned to the end of the 3rd or to the 4th century (*ibid.* 69). Shortt regards them as a distinctive Romano-British group, but there are fairly abundant Continental parallels, mostly illustrated by Jahn. Shortt also refers to a type in which the hook is replaced by a third 'rivet'—i.e. a stud-disc, and notes an example (eccentric, in iron) from Murten (Switzerland: Jahn *op. cit.* 120, Abb. 84). There is also a pair of such spurs in silver from Leuna (near Halle, German Democratic Republic: *ibid.* 121, Abb. 88). These examples do not have the bifurcated fourth terminal of our specimen, but this and the general style of the Silchester spur are well matched on the two-disc example from Trier (*ibid.* Abb. 81)—the style, indeed, by other spurs illustrated in this publication. Another particularly good parallel, in bronze, comes from the legionary fortress at Lauriacum (*Der rom. Limes in Österreich* XIII (1919), 255, Abb. 93, 5) founded about 200. This parallel suggests that the type is a military one. Mr Shortt has kindly conveyed to me (*in litt.* 8 November 1968) his opinion that the three-disc type is earlier than the two-disc-and-hook variety, and that in consequence the

Silchester spur should belong to the 3rd century. A small sketch included by Jahn in his Abb. 84 shows the suggested mode of wearing the spur. It is attached to what might be described as a 'half-sandal' covering the heel and instep. The stirrup, of course, was not known at this period, so that the rest of the foot is bare.

Stratfield Mortimer A follis of Constantine I (RIC VII p. 102, no. 93) was found in Stephens Firs, Mortimer (SU 647647). The coin remains in private hands.

Wargrave An almost complete but broken small grey pedestal pot, probably dating from the 1st century A.D. was found in a piece of waste ground between Wyatt's boatyard and the river. The pot remains in private hands.

SAXON

Maidenhead A Saxon black glass bead c. 1 in. diameter with central band of yellow glass inlay, a band either side of this retaining traces of white glass inlay, and an outer band of yellow ovals, was dug up by J. E. Thatcher in the garden of 58 Summerleaze Road (SU 895824). (65:68).

MEDIEVAL AND LATER

Wallingford Two rim sherds of medieval pottery were found during alterations in the cellar of the George Hotel. One rim has a deep channel for a lid seating comparable with some types from the 14th-15th century kiln at Potterspury, Northants. See *Archaeological News Letter*, March 1950, and *Oxonensia* XIV (1949), p. 78-79. (97:69/1-2).

A quantity of 12th-13th century pottery was found during alterations to Lloyds Bank, Wallingford. The group includes the major part of two cooking pots and the tubular spout of a 13th century pitcher comparable with that illustrated in *Berkshire Archaeological Journal*, Vol. 50, fig. 7, no. 7. (98:69).

Windsor Parts of at least seven skeletons were recovered from a trench for a water pipe in the grounds of The Manor, Old Windsor (SU 993747). These fall into two distinct groups, one group corroded and one fresh, suggesting two periods of burial separated by a long interval. The state of the teeth of the later set suggests a medieval or earlier date.