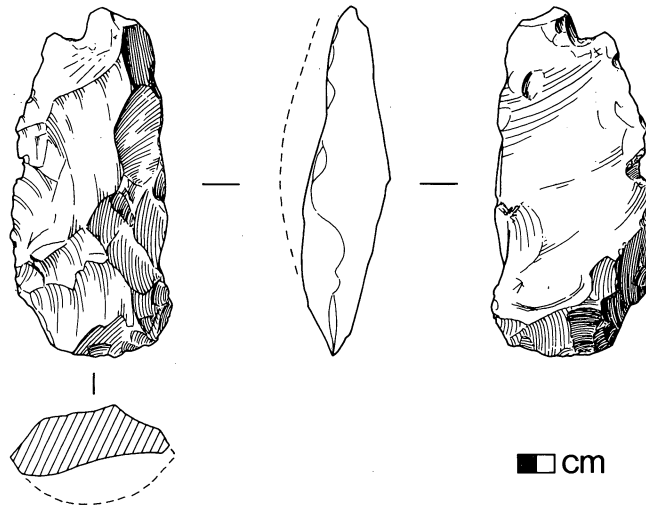


A Mesolithic tranchet axe from Carshalton

A small Mesolithic flint axe (fig 1) was found by Tom Walls in the upcast of a service trench close to Anne Boleyn's Well, Orchard Hill, Carshalton in 1966/7 (TQ 279 645).¹ The findspot lies below the 46m contour at the junction of the Thanet Sand and Upper Chalk, and overlooks Carshalton Ponds which are situated 20m or so to the north.

With a surviving length of 92mm, the implement is of a cherty, mottled grey 'chalk' flint. Although now shattered along its longitudinal axis, enough remains to show that both faces of its cutting edge had been formed by transverse or tranchet blows. Traces of subsequent use are evident from a notch at the butt end, and retouch along the shattered lateral edge. A patch of silica-gloss occurs close to the blade on one face. The small size of the piece, which falls within Wymer's arbitrary 'light' class (ie axes less than 10cm in length),² suggests that it may originally have been inserted in an antler sleeve.

This axe, like the majority of the flint scatter from the adjacent Queen's Well site,³ clearly relates to the prolific Mesolithic flint assemblage recovered during the 1964-5 excavation at Orchard Hill, which was sited on the rising ground a few metres to the south.⁴ The excavation produced well over 10,000 pieces of worked flint including another small tranchet axe, one or two broken pieces of axe and a few axe sharpening flakes, together with a number of microliths and scrapers.⁵



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to the finder for presenting the axe to the Beddington, Carshalton and Wallington Archaeological Society for safe-keeping.

NOTES

- 1 A small leaf-shaped flake and the distal end of a parallel-sided blade were also recovered by Mr Walls. In addition, the writer has a number of flakes and blades in his possession, which were found at various points round Orchard Hill in 1970-1.
- 2 J J Wymer, *Gazetteer of mesolithic sites in England and Wales*, CBA Res Rep, 20, 1977, xii
- 3 A S Gilbert, Subsidiary excavation, in D J Turner, Queen's Well, Carshalton, *SyAC*, 67, 1970, 49-50
- 4 D J Turner, Excavations at Orchard Hill, Carshalton, *London Natur*, 45, 1966, 100-4
- 5 *Ibid*, 102