

THE ADE COLLECTION OF FLINTS AND A PALAEOOLITHIC HANDAXE FROM HASSOCKS

By *E. W. Holden, F.S.A., and D. A. Roe, M.A., Ph.D.*

Three Palaeolithic handaxes are described by Derek A. Roe, and Mrs. F. E. S. Roe has kindly contributed the note regarding a cupped pebble. E. W. Holden is responsible for the remainder of the text and the drawings.

The *Ade Collection* is a small, but useful, collection of flints and a few miscellaneous stone objects given to the Society in 1972 by a member of the Ade family whose archaeological activities in East Sussex covered more than 100 years. As many of the flints are marked in ink or were in marked boxes, they are of more archaeological value than unprovenanced collections. The finds were made by Charles Ade, one of his sons John Stephen Ade, and a great-grandson of Charles, John Thomas Ade. It is particularly fitting that this material should have been given to the Society because both Charles and John Stephen were prominent nineteenth century members.

Charles Ade was born in 1790 and died in 1858. He joined the Society in 1846, only five weeks after the inaugural meeting, so he was almost a founder member. In 1848 he contributed a valuable paper to volume 1 of the *Collections* on a find of Anglo-Saxon coins at Alfriston. Subsequent volumes also bear testimony to his watchfulness in the Cuckmere valley, where he farmed at Milton Court, in Arlington. Ever on the alert for stray worked flints or pottery he watched barrows when, as was the custom in those days, they were sometimes robbed for flints for road mending, and records of which may be found in the *Collections*, usually with descriptive measurements or illustrations. On one occasion he recovered a Roman urn from Seaford an account of which he published accompanied by a woodcut of the vessel.¹ Charles Ade's original pencil sketch of this urn is in the Society's library. The drawing is finely executed on paper bearing a watermark of 1828, and the technique demonstrates that Charles Ade was a good draughtsman. It is of interest to note that a comparison of the sketch with the block-maker's woodcut shows how carefully the original had been copied. Charles Ade was a friend of the 'Father' of the Society, Mark Antony Lower, and Charles' sons were educated by Lower when he had a school at Alfriston.

Ade was a man of many parts, being responsible for reconstructing the causeway at Exceat in 1840, in commemoration of which he was presented with a silver medal,² and for his efforts in securing a railway station and approach roads at Berwick in 1846 he received a silver punchbowl³ and a silver tankard (presented to the Society in 1973).

John Stephen Ade, born 1825, died 1895, acquired the archaeological interest as well as the tenancy of Milton Court Farm from his father, collecting flints and recording finds in our volumes. He was one of the principal assistants of the Rev. W. de St. Croix when the latter was responsible for bricking the outline of the Long Man of Wilmington in 1874. Several pottery urns which had remained with the family were given to Hastings Museum about 1952; these were thought to

¹ *Sussex Archaeological Collections* (hereafter abbreviated to *S.A.C.*), vol. 9 (1857), 368.

² *S.A.C.* vol. 107 (1969), xl, No. 10. See also

Sussex Notes and Queries (hereafter abbreviated to *S.N.Q.*), vol. 16, No. 2, 1963, 40-43.

³ *S.A.C.* vol. 106 (1968), lxiii, No. 11.

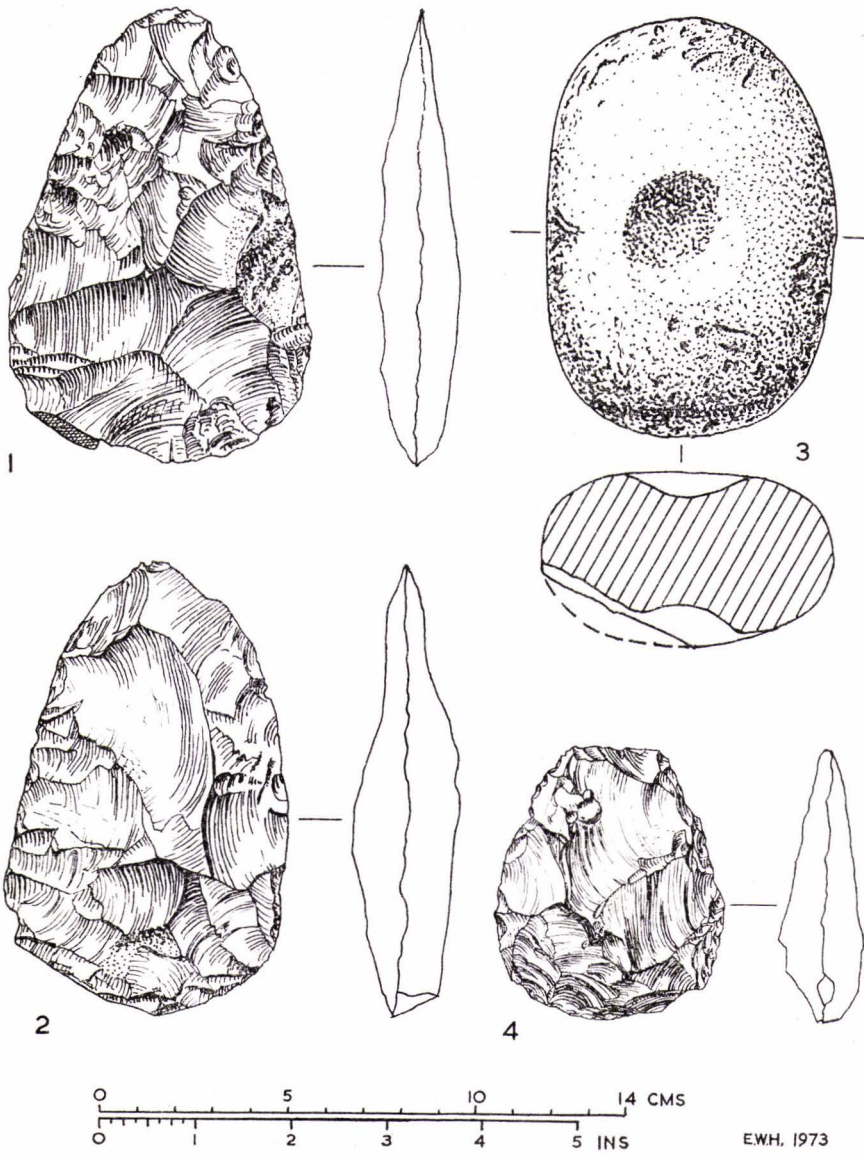


FIG. 1. Ade Collection. 1, 2, Handaxes from Burlough 'Castle' and Alfriston Tye. 3, Cupped pebble from Alfriston. Charman Collection. 4, Handaxe from Hassocks.

have been found at Burlough 'Castle' in the Cuckmere valley (as there was a loose label in the box), but the accurate dimensions and descriptions given by John Stephen Ade to three cremation urns rescued by him from a barrow at Alfriston (*S.A.C.*, vol 37 (1890), pp. 193-4) were found, in 1972, to agree with those vessels and they are now correctly labelled.

A later descendant, the late John Thomas Ade, farmed at Grove Hill, Hellingly, during the first half of this century. He collected flints and medieval pottery from Kiln Field, Grove Hill, also from some outlying fields which he rented to the SW., known as 'Boniface' and 'Birchet's' (or 'Burchett's'), now in the parish of Herstmonceux, but shown as in Wartling parish on the Tithe Map of 1844 (nos. 283-5, *E.S.R.O.*).

THE FLINTS (plus miscellaneous objects). The collection is registered at Barbican House Museum as 1973/1/1-44. Some flints, unfortunately, are unmarked, but are mostly of Neolithic or later flint types commonly found in East Sussex on or near the Downs, and possibly came from a relatively small area of which Milton Court, Arlington, was the centre. Of other artifacts which bear place-names and dates, one may be an extremely early example, viz., a small flint axe on which is written in ink, 'BURLOW 1835.' Unfortunately, the writing is in the same distinctive hand as other 'BURLOW' flints of 1882, etc., but the figure three in 1835 is perfectly plain and the eight is also well-defined. It seems, therefore, that Charles Ade could not have marked the 1835 flint and that it was done by his son, John Stephen. It could be a human error for 1885, but alternatively the flint may have had some form of impermanent label which John Stephen removed, marking the flint in ink like the others.

Space is insufficient to permit every flint to be illustrated or described, but two handaxes and a cupped pebble are dealt with in some detail. Besides examination by one of us (E.W.H.) all flints have been seen by Mr. R. Jacobi of Jesus College, Cambridge, who has noted and advised on the Mesolithic material.

The numbers in brackets preceding descriptions are arbitrary bag numbers given during sorting. Many of the flints from the Alfriston area are patinated a dense creamy-white colour, typical of flint artifacts from chalk downland; others are less densely patinated or are unpatinated and these must come from deposits where chalk is absent or the topsoil is exceptionally thick. None of the flints from Hellingly or Herstmonceux has the downland type of patination, but they pass through a colour range from nearly black, blue-grey to a creamy-grey. The raw material for these Wealden sites is likely to have come from the Downs as the cortex, or outer crust, where remaining on flints, resembles unrolled downland-type cortex, with one exception (in Bag 20) which appears to have come from flint gravel.

TWO PALAEOLITHIC HANDAXES by Derek A. Roe. These implements from Arlington and Alfriston, form an interesting addition to the Sussex Palaeolithic material reviewed by D. A. Roe and E. W. Holden in 1968.¹ They may be briefly described as follows:—

(22) (Fig. 1,1). Handaxe marked 'BURLOW 1882.' The find spot is near Burlough Castle (TQ 530042), not in fact a castle, but a natural feature standing above the Cuckmere valley about 1.6km. NE. of Alfriston on the opposite side of the river. It consists of a fragment of the edge of a Pleistocene river terrace with the old river cliff and bluff deposits. The flat top is about 150

¹ D. A. Roe and E. W. Holden, "Two recently discovered Lower Palaeolithic handaxes from North-

ease Farm, Rodmell, and a note on Sussex Palaeoliths," *S.A.C.*, vol. 106 (1968), 206-12.

by 75m. and reaches about 18m. O.D.; the bedrock is Lower Chalk. Many years' ploughing of the top of the feature has produced an assortment of finds of prehistoric and later date and the handaxe probably came to light in this way.

The implement is unstained and unpatinated and in near-mint condition, but without further information about the circumstances of its discovery there is no reason at all to doubt its authenticity. It is very flat and refined, being fully worked on both faces by flat flaking of great technical competence. The cutting edge runs completely round the implement, except for a small blunt area on the butt, which could be the sole remnant of a striking platform if, as the flatness suggests, the handaxe was made from a specially struck flake rather than a selected flat pebble or nodule. The shape is sub-triangular (triangular with rounded angles), and the dimensions (parallel or at right-angles to the long axis) are: length, 122mm.; breadth, 82mm.; thickness, 24mm. The handaxe is made of good, grey-black flint with some cherty inclusions. A small patch of fairly thick cortex survives on one face, touching but not interfering with the cutting edge.

(21) (Fig. 1,2). Handaxe marked 'ALFRISTON TYE 1892.' The Tye is the triangular grassy area of about 150 by 50m. (TQ 521030) immediately W. of the church at Alfriston, and it is not known exactly where the artifact was found. The subsoil consists of alluvium, and the surface is at about 8m. O.D.

The handaxe is not abraded, but is somewhat weathered and patinated a dull grey-white; recent chips reveal grey-black flint under the patina. The shape is sub-triangular, a little less regular than that of the Burlough implement, to which, however, it bears a strong similarity. The dimensions are: length, 122mm.; breadth, 75mm.; thickness, 29mm. The flaking is fully bifacial and the standard of workmanship good. Most of the butt is blunt, but otherwise the cutting edge extends right round the implement. A very small patch of cortex remains on one face. As in the case of the Burlough handaxe, it seems very likely that the blank for this implement was a struck flake rather than a pebble or nodule.

In shape, size and technology, these two handaxes are strikingly similar, though there is no other demonstrable connection between them and the two find-spots are well apart. As they are single finds of uncertain stratigraphic context, it would be dangerous to make too much of them on mere typological grounds. Nevertheless, their sub-triangular, rather axe-like shape, their refinement and good workmanship remind one strongly of the so-called *bout coupé* class of handaxe.¹ Of the latter, more than a hundred classic examples have been found in southern Britain² and the type seems to lie outside the Acheulian range, falling within that of certain handaxe-using groups of the Mousterian. Although some of the classic British *bout coupé* handaxes do occur in arguably 'Mousterian' contexts (at Kent's Cavern, Coygan Cave and Oldbury Rock Shelters, for instance), the large majority have come to light as single finds, often on the surface or apparently derived from Pleistocene deposits of comparatively young age—a number have been dredged from the Thames, for example. Several are loosely associated with Levalloisian cores and/or flakes.

A Sussex implement of this kind is the handaxe from Woods Hill, West Chiltington (Worthing Museum 55/182), illustrated by L.V. Grinsell in 1929.³ Another probably of the same class

¹ D. A. Roe, "British Lower and Middle Palaeolithic Handaxe Groups," in *Proc. Prehistoric Soc.*, vol. 34 (1968), 1-82 (see particularly 18-19).

² A list is included by D. A. Roe in his Ph.D. thesis, *A study of handaxe groups of the British Lower and Middle Palaeolithic periods using methods of*

metrical and statistical analysis, with a gazetteer of British Lower and Middle Palaeolithic sites (University of Cambridge, 1967), 236-47.

³ L. V. Grinsell, "The Lower and Middle Palaeolithic periods in Sussex," *S.A.C.*, vol. 70 (1929), 176, 181-2.

from Wilmington Hill, is illustrated by E. C. Curwen¹ and is now in Barbican House Museum at Lewes. A further possible example, from Friston, is also in the Barbican House Museum, preserved with other handaxes from the same place, some of which are certainly not outside the Mousterian range, and a small struck Levalloisian core, though whether they all really belong together is uncertain. The evidence relating to most of the British *bout coupé* handaxe finds is similarly incomplete but often tantalising, and, in aggregate, certainly suggestive of a fairly late Palaeolithic date for these implements. If we return, against this background, to the Burlough and Alfriston handaxes from the Ade collection, we may note that although the Burlough example was found near a Pleistocene gravel of fair antiquity, the implement's condition suggests that it was never in the gravel and hence should be younger, while the Alfriston Tye specimen perhaps came from alluvium, which would again suggest no great age: it is not water-worn or otherwise abraded.

Various Palaeolithic artifacts have been found in the Cuckmere valley.² No others are known from Burlough itself, but Alfriston has produced at least ten other handaxes and a few other artifacts, mostly from the surface, the find-spots not having been recorded in detail. The largest group of these is now in the reserve collections of the London Museum, and the rest are at Barbican House and the British Museum. Some of them are certainly similar in patination and condition to the Ade collection handaxe from Alfriston Tye, and amongst these is a broken handaxe in the London Museum series which might well have been an example of the *bout coupé* type. Grinsell referred in 1929³ to a Levalloisian core from Alfriston, and in addition the Barbican House collection includes a white-patinated disc-like biface which could be of any prehistoric age but would certainly not be out of place in a Mousterian assemblage.

However, it is important to recall that conclusions about the two Ade collection handaxes can be no more than provisional: these are poorly documented finds made 80 and 90 years ago. In summary, let us simply say that both handaxes resemble the classic *bout coupé* type, and there are therefore some grounds for suggesting that they may be of Middle Palaeolithic Mousterian, rather than Lower Palaeolithic Acheulian, origin. Such other shreds of evidence as there are, discussed above, do not conflict with this assessment but are circumstantial and at best only indirect.

MESOLITHIC. A 'Cupped Pebble' (Fig. 1,3), marked 'BURNT HOUSE 1880'. The name refers to Burnt House Farm, Alfriston, but the precise location is unknown. The grid reference of the farmhouse is TQ 518022. (This pebble has been retained by the owner and is not part of the collection. Such pebbles are sufficiently rare, however, to be worthy of discussion). Although not examined petrologically it appears to be a natural waterworn pebble of quartzite, brown in colour, with a pecked hollow on both faces. The sides and ends show signs of attrition and the face not illustrated has had two large flakes knocked off, presumably by accident during use. The weight now is 0.53kg., but would have been a little more before damage occurred.

Note on the Cupped Pebble by Mrs. F. E. S. Roe, M.A., M.LITT.

The cupped quartzite pebble belongs to a variety of implement which, although widespread in Britain, has not inspired detailed research. Satisfactory associations for such cupped pebbles

¹ E. C. Curwen, *The Archaeology of Sussex*, 2nd edn. (1954), 43: Fig. 6, no. 3.

² Grinsell, 1929, op cit., including map, 172. See also D. A. Roe, *A Gazetteer of British Lower and*

Middle Palaeolithic Sites (1968), Council for British Archaeology, Research Report no. 8. The Sussex sites are listed on 295-305.

³ Grinsell, 1929, op cit., 180.

are generally lacking, but finds from Lower Halstow, Kent,¹ and Thatcham, Berks.,² suggest an early date (Mesolithic) for their initial use. They may have served as hammer-stones, the cupped hollows providing a grip for the thumb and forefinger. The maximum dimensions of the example from Burnt House are: length, 112mm.; breadth, 78mm.; depth, 45mm.

From *Kiln Field, Grove Hill, Hellingly* (Mesolithic), centred around TQ 602141. The field in 1972 was under grass; the subsoil is Lower Tunbridge Wells Sand. (1) 25 Flakes and blade flakes with retouch. (2) 3 Microliths. (3) 2 Scrapers (possibly Mesolithic).

OTHER MESOLITHIC FINDS. (25) Flint tranchet axe marked 'BURLOW 1884' (Burlough 'Castle,' TQ 530042). (26) Ditto marked 'BURNT HOUSE 1889' (Farmhouse is at TQ 518022). (28) Ditto marked 'MILTON 1890' (Milton Court is TQ 527038). (35) Ditto no provenance.

NEOLITHIC TYPE AND LATER. From *Kiln Field, Grove Hill, Hellingly*—all flint. (4) 1 Scraper. (5) 4 Leaf-shaped arrowheads (1 broken) bifacially worked. (6) 1 Petit tranchet derivative arrowhead (Late Neolithic). (7) 1 Barbed and tanged (equal length) arrowhead, bifacially worked (Beaker Period). (9) 1 Broken ground axe marked 'HELLINGLY 1911,' the end nearest the butt retouched into a coarse chopping edge. Exact find-spot unknown (Cf. *S.N.Q.*, vol. 16 (No. 9, 1967), p.321, for another ground axe from Hellingly).

From *Burchett's Field* or *Long Burchett's* (field names) *Herstmonceux*. These two fields adjoin one another, the former being around TQ 610128; the bed rock is Lower Tunbridge Wells sandstone. Three flints out of a small boxful are marked 'Birchets' or 'Birchets 1900.' By permission of Mr. R. Pengelly, these fields were searched during the winter, 1972-3 and a handful of flint flakes found, all but two in 'Long Burchett's.' A large field immediately W. of the two named fields was also searched after ploughing and worked flints were found as follows: 43 flakes, 2 cores, 2 scrapers, 1 fabricator, 1 retouched flake (all downland type flint), 2 flakes with retouch having beach pebble cortex. All three fields contain a sparse sprinkling of water-rolled beach pebbles, but whether they are anciently deposited or have been spread with manure has not been decided. The flints from the first two named fields are: (10) 1 Utilised core. (11-14, 19) 70 Flakes, mostly trimmed or apparently utilised, but much of the latter could be plough damage. (15-16) 10 Scrapers. (17) 1 Fabricator. (18) 2 Possible and 1 certain P.T.D. arrowheads (Late Neolithic).

(23) 1 Small ? axe marked 'BURLOW 1835' (see above). (24) 1 Pick or hoe marked 'BURLOW 1882.' (27) 3 Scrapers marked 'BURNT HOUSE 1887, 1888 and 1891' respectively. (29) 3 Scrapers marked 'MILTON 1887, 1889, 1890' respectively. (30) 1 Ground axe, distal end re-flaked, marked 'EAST DEAN 1882' (this would be Eastdean parish, nr. Eastbourne, village being TV 557977). (32) 1 Quartzite (probably) ground axe, the distal end damaged, length now 123mm.; max. width, 60mm.; oval section, 28mm. thick, marked 'HAYREEDS I.S.A.' The initials are of John Stephen Ade. The site is on Hayreed Farm, Arlington, around TQ 553064.

¹ J. P. T. Burchell, "The Shell Mound Industry of Denmark as represented at Lower Halstow, Kent," *Proc. Prehist. Soc. E. Anglia*, vol. 5 (1925-6), 75; J. P. T. Burchell, "Further report on the Epi-palaeolithic Factory Site at Lower Halstow, Kent," *ibid.*, vol. 5, 217 and Pl. 3, no. 10.

² H. J. E. Peake and O. G. S. Crawford, "A Flint Factory at Thatcham, Berks," *P.P.S.E.A.*, vol. 3 (1921-2), 508; H. H. Coghlan, "Stone Hammers in the Newbury Museum," *Trans. Newbury Dist. Field Club*, vol. 8 (1945), 281-2 and Fig. 1.

PERIOD UNKNOWN. (33) 1 Quartzite (probably) pebble, ? natural, plano-convex in section, wider at one end than the other: length, 90mm.; max. width, 41mm.; thickness, 13mm. The flat side has faint traces of lustre, ? a burnisher of some kind. In plan it resembles a small, ground flint axe with all edges and corners rounded. It is marked 'BONIFACE 1950.' *Boniface Field* and *Boniface 9 Acres* lie N. of *Burchett's Field* in Herstmonceux parish, c TQ 610130. Mr. C. F. Tebbutt kindly informs me that there is a flint scraper and a possible microlith from a site called *Boniface Field* among a collection of flints in a museum of curiosities owned by the late Mr. Joyce at Fletching, Sussex.

PROVENANCE UNCERTAIN (unmarked flints) NEOLITHIC OR LATER. (34) 1 P.T.D. arrowhead (Late Neolithic). (36) 2 Ground axes (broken). (37) 2 Cores, both retouched. (38) 1 Tertiary flake, white patinated, kidney-shaped: length 94mm.; width, 60mm.; thickness, 15mm. One edge has shallow retouch for half its length and at the distal end, while the other end shows signs of utilisation. It fits the hand admirably for use as a cutting instrument, and although it bears none of the distinctive silica gloss of a well-used sickle flint artifact, it would have been very suitable for cutting cereal stalks. (39-41) 29 White patinated scrapers.

A PALAEO-LITHIC HANDAXE FROM HASSOCKS by Derek A. Roe. The implement shown in Fig. 1,4 was found in the 1950's in the area of Parklands Road, Hassocks (N.G.R. for the general area; TQ 307155), by our member, Mr. C. Charman and who has kindly placed it on long loan at Barbican House Museum, Lewes (Acc. no. 1973/3).

Flint artifacts of Mesolithic, Neolithic and later ages (including a barbed and tanged arrowhead of Beaker type) were found in some quantity on the surface and in the topsoil, when an area of about 150 by 100m. off Parklands Road was cleared for the building of some new houses and the re-levelling and re-sowing of a school sports field. This particular implement was recovered with the rest, and was not picked out at the time as being of a different age. Its true nature was recognised by R. M. Jacobi and E. W. Holden on a visit to Mr. Charman. The implement may have lain in the soil with the others, or it could have been brought up by bulldozing from a greater depth, but the local bedrock is Lower Greensand and no specific deposits of Pleistocene age have been observed in the immediate area. The implement's condition is quite consistent with the suggestion that it lay in (or at the base of) the soil. It is unabraded, and there is developed whitish-yellow patina spread patchily over most of one face, while the other has only a small area of incipient patination. The unpatinated flint is dark grey-brown.

This artifact certainly seems to lie right outside the range of Mesolithic or later prehistoric tool kits, and is a small fully bifacial handaxe whose workmanship is well within the usual traditions of such tools in the later Lower Palaeolithic or Middle Palaeolithic. The extreme base and extreme tip have suffered slight modern damage and there are a few other small recent scars affecting the edges, but the original broad ovoid or cordiform plan shape is essentially unaltered, except that the tip, though evidently blunt, may not have been quite as square as it now appears. The existing principal dimensions of the handaxe are: length, 75mm.; breadth, 62.5mm.; thickness, 23.5mm. The cutting edge extends completely round the circumference and is straight, with no sign of twisting. There is no 'tranchet finish' scar on either face, though this device was not infrequently used on handaxes of this kind to produce a sharp, bevelled cutting edge at a rather square tip end. The flatness of the implement's profile, and the regularity of its plan form, are, however, both indications of 'refinement' in the sense of technological proficiency shown by the maker. Whether the handaxe was made from a struck flake or a flat pebble or nodule is not clear.

This handaxe falls in the area of common ground shown by assemblages of the Late Middle Acheulian on the one hand and the Mousterian of Acheulian tradition on the other; in the absence of associated artifacts or stratigraphical evidence, we cannot really choose between these alternatives. There certainly are handaxe types more or less exclusive to each: for example, an isolated occurrence of a fairly narrow twisted ovate with maximum breadth about centrally placed we could have felt justified in attributing to the Late Middle Acheulian, with sites like Elveden (Suffolk) in mind, while a single classic *bout coupé* handaxe would certainly belong to the Mousterian of Acheulian Tradition as represented at Oldbury Rock Shelters (Kent) or Kent's Cavern (Devon). The present implement, however, would be perfectly at home in the Oldbury assemblage or at Late Middle Acheulian sites like Bowman's Lodge (Kent) or Warren Hill (Suffolk). Although the Mousterian handaxes are more often small, like this one, there are plenty of individual small examples in the Late Middle Acheulian, notably at the last two sites mentioned.¹

The difference between the two possible attributions is an important one, because the Late Middle Acheulian has a probable time range from the close of the Hoxnian Interglacial to perhaps some time in the Eemian (Last Interglacial), while the Mousterian of Acheulian Tradition apparently falls wholly within the Last Glacial period. It is certainly true that a number of isolated classic Mousterian handaxes have been found in Southern Britain on the surface or in superficial deposits, in very much the same manner of the probable occurrence of this Hassocks find. The two from the Cuckmere valley (already described) might belong to this class and others from Sussex have been discussed (*supra*, pp.4-5). Some of them really fall into the same area of Acheulian-Mousterian typological overlap as the handaxe from Hassocks.

One other handaxe from Hassocks has been recorded.² Now in Brighton Museum, it was found in excavated clay near Downs View Road, and is described as an unpatinated Acheulian ovate. It is more than half as large again as Mr. Charman's find, and its proportions are a little narrower and a little thicker.

¹ For further details of the sites referred to in this paragraph, see D. A. Roe, "British Lower and Middle Palaeolithic Handaxe Groups, *Proc. Prehist. Soc.*, vol.

34 (1968), 1-82.

² *S.N.Q.*, vol. 15, no. 4, 1959, 130.