

# Short articles



## A Middle Palaeolithic Levallois core from Ringmer, East Sussex

Greg Chuter

East Sussex County Council Archaeology Team, County Hall,  
St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, East Sussex

During excavations on a Romano-British site at the East Sussex Glider Club, Broyle Road, Ringmer in 2007, a very large knapped flint (Fig. 1) was recovered from the fill of a Romano-British ditch. The excavations, organised by the East Sussex County Council Archaeology Team, were focused on a small Late Iron Age and Romano-British industrial settlement exposed during the construction of a new runway (Chuter, forthcoming).

Although the object is from a Roman context, its size, form and patination suggested that it was early prehistoric. The piece is in an unabraded condition, suggesting that it was originally found nearby in Wealden Clay geology, possibly during extraction of the iron ore which was being processed on the Roman site. The flint is likely to have been brought back to the site as a curio and later deposited in the ditch.

The core is 22cm long and 16cm wide, with a maximum thickness of 8cm, and weighs 2.3kg. It has been manufactured from a large, heavily river-rolled flint cobble, now patinated light brown, with two areas of remaining cortex. There are remnants of a striking platform at one end, from which at least two contemporary Levallois flakes have been removed.

The core exhibits what appears to be later flake removal or impact damage on one side, visible by its lighter patination. Occurring before deposition in the ditch, this may have been a result of its discovery in the Roman period.

The Levallois technique of core preparation and flake removal is one of the earliest of the core preparation technologies, appearing in Northern Europe around 300,000 years ago. It is thought to be associated with early Neanderthal populations, and continued in use into the Late Pleistocene. The technology works in four distinct stages. The edges of a cobble are first trimmed into a rough shape. The upper surface of the core is trimmed to remove the bulk of the cortex and to produce a ridge running the length of the core. A platform preparation flake is removed from one end of the core to produce an even, flat striking platform for the blow that will detach the flake. Finally, the end of the core is struck at the prepared platform site, driving a longitudinal flake off of the core following the longitudinal ridge. There are two distinct advantages to this technique. The flakes removed in this manner are already in a preliminary shape, and more usable cutting edge per pound of raw material can be made this way than by producing core tools.

There have been very few Levallois finds in Sussex, but a number of other Palaeolithic tools have been found recently in this section of the Ouse valley, including at the recent

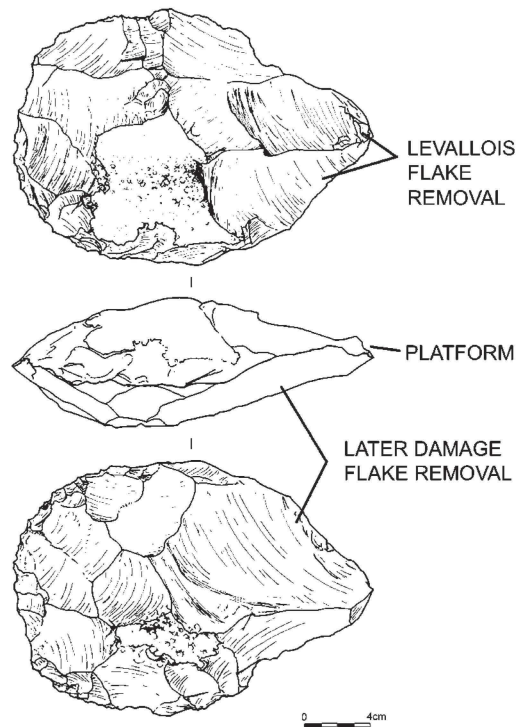


Fig. 1. The flint.

Barcombe Roman villa excavations. This rare Neanderthal object will be offered to Brighton Museum's 'Ice Age Sussex' collection.

### Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Dr Andrew Woodcock for confirming the author's identification of the object, Dr Matt Pope for his comments on the draft article, and Linda Wright for illustrating it.