SHORTER NOTICES

A Possible Late Upper Palaeolithic Site at Cranwich, Norfolk.

BY J. J. WYMER M.A., F.S.A.

THE purpose of this short note is to bring together and put on record a few flint artifacts which indicate that a site may exist of the Late Upper Palaeolithic period at Cranwich. This was originally suggested by the late Mr. Rainbird Clark (1960, p. 42) when he referred to a tanged flint flake from Cranwich which he recognised as being similar to those found with the Hamburgian of N.W. Germany. This flint is in the Norwich Castle Museum (Fig. 1, 3). The writer's attention was particularly directed to this by having in his possession another tanged flint point, of a rather different type, also from Cranwich. This was found by the late B. O. Wymer, father of the writer, on the surface some time in the 1920's (Fig. 1, 5) together with a small backed blade (Fig. 1, 2). These have now been placed in Norwich Museum, and the opportunity was taken to examine the collections in that museum from Cranwich, and also to consider some possible parallels. So little is known of this period in Britain that any further information which could be relevant warrants publication.

Cranwich lies five miles north of Brandon on the northern part of the Breckland. Surface flints are common in the area and a detailed account of them appeared in the first volume of the Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society of East Anglia (Halls, 1914). H. H. Halls had collected over a thousand artifacts and he divided them into three groups on the basis of their patination. He relegated 351 to his "White Group", which he added were "found on a rich loam in which water rests in wet weather". This group seemed as though it may be relevant to the tanged points mentioned above, as both of these were also patinated white, but when examined at Norwich Museum it was apparent that Halls' groups, based on degrees of patination, did not coincide with any assemblages that might have been differentiated on grounds of typology. This is, of course, not surprising, in such an area where the complex superficial geology may cause soils to vary from field to field, and so effect the differential rate of patination, apart from other factors. Such a random collection of surface flints is likely to contain artifacts of various periods; the mass of flakes and scrapers, either patinated or unpatinated, could be of any period since the Last Glaciation, but certain types such as arrowheads may be regarded as Neolithic. The only obvious Mesolithic piece in the Halls Collection is an unpatinated microlith, but another microlith from Cranwich in a different collection at the same museum, is patinated (Fig. 1, 1). Three blades, likely to be Mesolithic, are also unpatinated. A backed blade (Fig. 1, 4) in the Halls' Collection at Norwich Castle Museum has a lustrous white patina. The only

thing that can be said as regards patination is that the two points and the two backed blades, selected on typological grounds as being possible products of a Late Upper Palaeolithic industry, are all patinated, the thick, tanged one, very deeply so. It may be significant that these are *all* patinated, whereas later flints may or may not be patinated.

The microlith is best dismissed as most likely to be Mesolithic, but the two tanged points have their best parallels in one of the tanged point industries well represented in N.W. Germany, Denmark and the Low Countries during Zones I to III. The thinner, more elegant tanged point is similar to those from Ahrensburg or Bromme. The thicker point, with its tip at the bulbous end and a little inverse retouch, is matched by points from Lyngby, Jutland (Mathiassen, 1948). It would be pressing typological significance too far to go further than relegate these finds to more than a strong probability that they belong to an industry within Zones II and III (Alleröd and Younger Dryas). The two backed blades could well fit into this context.

The richest site in Britain of this period is at Hengistbury Head in Hampshire (Mace, 1959) which is dated to Zones II–III solely on the grounds of continental parallels for the tanged and shouldered points. Most of the points from Hengistbury Head are made on thin blades although at least one (Mace, 1959, 251, Fig. 9, No. 75) resembles the thick example from Cranwich, and it may be significant that this also has the tang at the non-bulbous end. It does not have the same inverse retouch on the point. A few similar finds have come from not far away at Portsmouth (Draper, 1962) and, in the opposite direction, at Portland Bill, Mrs. Susann Palmer (1967) records four more. She kindly informs me that another one occurred in her recent excavations at the Bill, where Mesolithic and Late Upper Palaeolithic type artifacts were found mixed together on top of the Late Glacial loam and head (Personal communication). Two shouldered points similar to those from Hengistbury Head are also known from Oare, Kent (Clark, 1938) near the Isle of Sheppey in the Thames Estuary. Backed or long blades from the Kennet Valley in Berkshire, (now in Newbury Museum) may also date to the Late Upper Palaeolithic period.

These few sites tentatively suggest a migration from the Low Countries up what is now the English Channel, and also into the Lower Thames Estuary, as might be expected by hunters who had their origins in the Low Countries or N.W. Europe. A stray find from Godalming in Surrey (Winbolt, 1929) of a tanged point with unifacial working across the face of the pointed end may be of the same period. In the British Museum is a thick tanged point from Mildenhall, Suffolk, and the brown lustrous staining indicates that it has probably come from beneath peat somewhere in that district. There is also another, thinner tanged point (6.7 cm. long) in the British Museum from Mildenhall with a creamy yellow-blue patina, and it has been claimed that the prolific sites at Wilde Street, Beck Row, Mildenhall, excavated by Col. T. C. Kelly in 1963, may be of Late Upper Palaeolithic date. No more than brief reports on the existence of these sites has yet been published, but an examination of some of the material at Ipswich, Norwich, Bury St. Edmunds, Mildenhall, Pitt Rivers and British Museums suggests that it is a Mesolithic industry with a

larger proportion than usual of long, elegant blades. More than one period may be represented, but the sites do not appear to have produced tanged points and the types of backed blades which are such strong indicators of Late Upper Palaeolithic activities. Similar flints have come from Hockwold-cum-Wilton in the same area, also found by Col. T. C. Kelly and are now in Ipswich Museum. Among them is a backed blade of Late Upper Palaeolithic aspect and it is patinated. The remainder of the artifacts from this site are in fresh condition and this may be significant. Suffolk has produced another tanged point, from Great Fakenham, and now in Thetford Museum. It is made from a thin blade, is 7.2 cm. long and patinated. An obliquely truncated blade from Barnham, Suffolk, is also in Thetford Museum and is not a typical Mesolithic artifact. These few flints, together with those from Cranwich, suggest some penetration into East Anglia during the Late Upper Palaeolithic period, but it would be unwise to press this conclusion far, based as it is solely on typological considerations.

It must be stressed that tanged points were produced in the Bann River Industry of Northern Ireland, in the Komso-Fosna Industries of Northern Scandinavia, and even in the Ertebolle Industry of Denmark, all much more recent than the Late Upper Palaeolithic period. The distribution and movement of these people into Britain will not be known until sealed sites in datable contexts are excavated. The Cranwich flints at least indicate that there is a possibility of such sites eventually being found in this part of East Anglia.

REFERENCES

Clark, J. G. D. 1938. Reindeer Hunters' Summer Camps in Britain. *Proc. Prehist. Soc.*, 4, 229, fig. 1.

Clark, R. R. 1960. East Anglia, *Ancient People and Places*. Thames & Hudson, London.

Draper, J. C. 1962. Upper Palaeolithic type Flints from Long Island, Langstone Harbour, Portsmouth. *Proc. Hants. Field Club*, 22, 105–6.

Halls, H. H. 1914. Implements from a Station at Cranwich, Norfolk. *Proc. Prehist. Soc. E. Anglia*, 1, 454–7, pls. CXV–CXXI.

Mace, A. 1959. An Upper Palaeolithic Open-site at Hengistbury Head, Christchurch, Hants. *Proc. Prehist. Soc.*, 25, 233–59.

Mathiassen, T. 1948. *Danske Oldsager I. Aeldre Stenalder*, Gyldendalske, Copenhagen.

Palmer, S. 1967. Upper Palaeolithic artifacts from Portland. In Archæological Notes and News for 1967. *Proc. Dorset Nat. Hist. and Arch. Soc.*, 89, 117–9.

Winbolt, S. E. 1929. A Late Pleistocene Flint Point. *Antiq. J.*, 9, 152–3.

1. *Microlith*
Norwich Museum 153.929 (J. S. Warburton).
Lustrous, white patina, slightly worn on edges. Figured with bulbous end uppermost and probably made by micro-burin technique. Tip missing; fracture later than patination but not apparently recent. No inverse retouch.

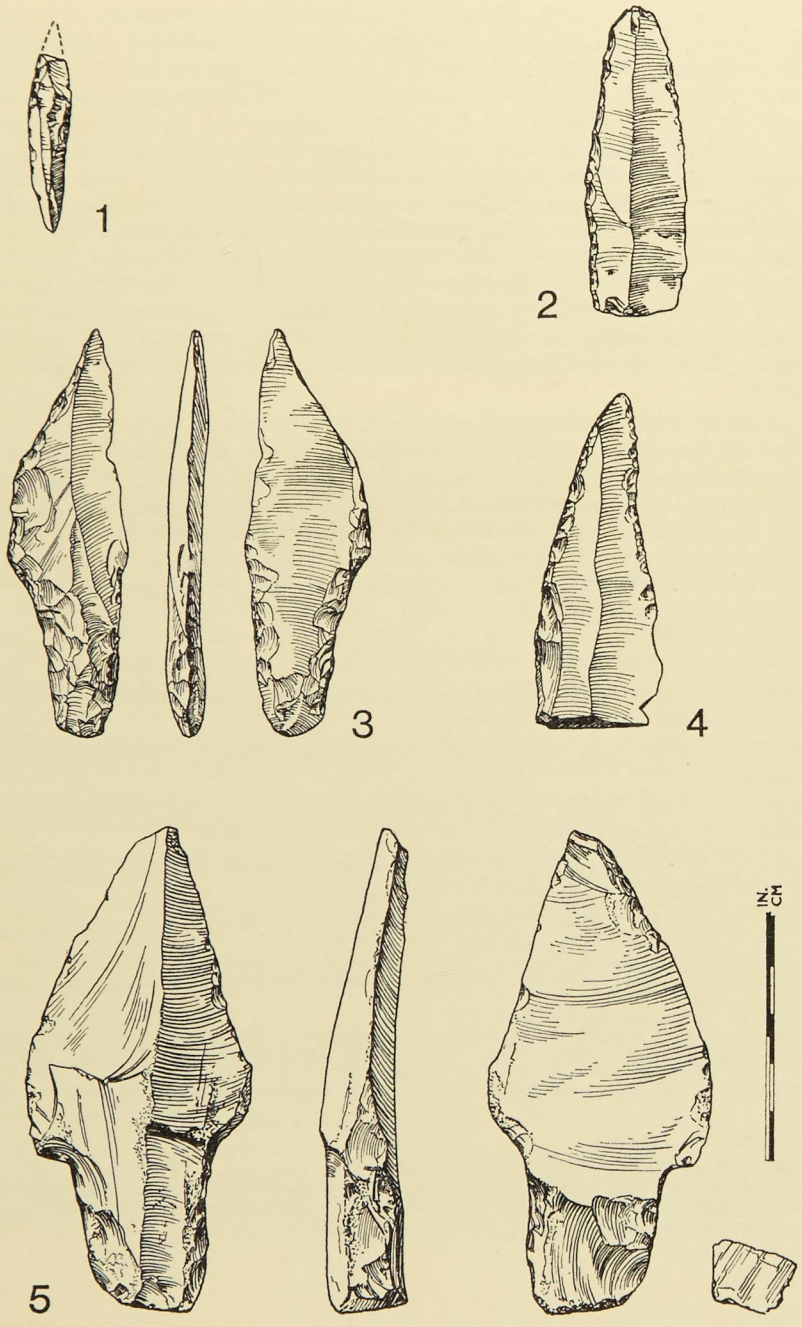

Fig. 1. Surface flint artifacts from Cranwich, Norfolk. 2-5: of Late Upper Palaeolithic form