

Later Neolithic discoidal knives in Surrey: Corrections and Additions

My attention has been drawn to a potentially misleading statement contained within my paper on Surrey discoidal knives which appeared in volume 75 of the *Collections* (Cotton 1984). It concerns the evidence for Neolithic flint mining in the county, which I there described as 'unconvincing' (1984, 231), and in support of which I quoted, amongst others, Commander Todd's interim note on the Green Dene site at East Horsley, published in 1950 (Todd 1950). In so doing I omitted to point out that this view was subsequently modified in the definitive account of the site published by Eric Wood two years later (Wood 1952), which, although written after Todd's death, made use of his site notes, followed full discussion with him, and included personal experience of the site (Eric Wood pers comm). From this, it seems reasonably clear that the site should be seen as a Neolithic surface quarrying operation later disturbed by medieval mining activity; it is not, therefore, an unconvincing Neolithic flint mine, and my apologies are due to the late Commander Todd and to Eric Wood for implying otherwise.

I should also like to take this opportunity to correct the unfortunate mis-spelling of Chris Ellmers' name which slipped through unnoticed in the acknowledgements of the paper. This was equally regrettable, and my apologies are due to him as well.

Since the completion of the original article, in the spring of 1983, two more discoidal knives have been located; a complete but unground example from 'Bramble Field, Seale', found in 1920 and now in Guildford Museum, and a fragmentary ground piece from the Friends' Burial Ground, Staines (Crouch & Shanks 1984, fig 17:37). In addition, it may be possible to re-interpret the broken implement from the Abinger Common 'pit-dwelling' site, which was published as 'a small fragment of a polished axe' (Leakey 1951, 15, 25 and fig 12:16), as part of a further ground discoidal. Details of each are contained in the Appendix.

These new finds add little but corroborative detail to the general picture outlined in the original paper. It is therefore no surprise to find that the artefact from the Chalk/Greensand country at Seale is of a blue-grey 'chalk' flint, while that from the Thames valley at Staines is of a light brown, probably 'gravel' flint.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Eric Wood for bringing the error concerning the East Horsley site to my attention, and to the Editor for providing me with this speedy opportunity to set the record straight. Thanks are also due to Julia Arthur of Guildford Museum and Phil Jones of the Staines Archaeological Unit for allowing examination of the Seale and Staines implements respectively.

Appendix

SEALE Bramble Field. Seale centred SU 896 479
 Measurements: 58 × 46mm. Class: I (Clark 1929, 41). Geology: ?Upper Chalk.
 Bifacially worked oval implement of attractively banded slate grey-blue flint.
 Unground.
 Marked 'Bramble Field Seale 1920'.
 Present location: Guildford Museum store (acc no G 1910).
 Unpublished.

STAINES Friends' Burial Ground. TQ 036 715

Measurements: approx 46 × 43mm. Class: ?I (Clark 1929, 41).

Unifacially worked fragmentary implement of patinated light brown flint with surviving portion of edge ground and polished. Later re-used.

Found in a pebbly brown soil containing much Romano-British material during the excavations of the Friends' Burial Ground in 1975–6.

Present location: Spelthorne Museum store.

References: Crouch & Shanks 1984, 27 and fig 17:37.

ABINGER COMMON Raikes Farm 'pit-dwelling'. TQ 1118 4584

Measurements: approx 30 × 26mm. Geology: Lower Greensand.

Bifacially worked fragmentary implement with surviving portion of edge ground and polished.

Found in a 'narrow band of yellow clayey sand (= Layer 3) which lay between the dark brown sub-soil and the old land surface on top of the Greensand'. Described by the excavator as 'undoubtedly intrusive' (Leakey 1951, 25).

Present location: unknown.

References: Leakey 1951, 15, 25 and fig 12:16.

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