

CONSIDERATIONS ON CERTAIN FLINT IMPLEMENTS AND OTHER ANTIQUITIES FROM THE WORCESTER AND MALVERN DISTRICT

By A. R. BOWEN, D.Sc.

Although a considerable amount of work has been published on the prehistory of the Worcester and Malvern district much still remains to be done before a more complete story can be told. It is recorded¹ that until the seventeenth century a considerable part of the county of Worcestershire was forest—a part of the Mercian forest. Indications, however, of settlements and trackways are numerous. G. B. Grundy² has investigated the ancient tracks and gives the routes of saltways and ridgeways. Important among these may be mentioned:—the Malvern and Ankerdine ridgeways, the link ridgeway from Worcester to Berrow Green, the ridgeway north from Worcester on the west side of the river through Hallow Heath and on the east side through Uphampton. Saltways radiate out from Droitwich. P. H. L'Estrange also refers to these trackways.³

The story of early man in the Palæolithic period is connected with the Ice Ages. L. J. Wills⁴ describes the effect of the four glacial and inter-glacial periods in the Midlands. At the onset of the first (Bercroian) glaciation there was no middle Severn as we know it to-day, the upper river draining to Liverpool Bay. The Avon existed with its two main tributaries, the pre-glacial Stour and Teme.

The second glaciation (Catuvellaunian) was followed by a long inter-glacial period in which time Acheulian men roamed this country. This inter-glacial period is represented by the Kidderminster Terrace occurring there and at Hallow and Holt Heath and forming the top gravel terrace at Hartlebury Common. In the third (Cornovian) glaciation the Severn cut the gorge from Iron Bridge to Bridgnorth and formed a river valley in the form we know it now. This period is shown to-day by the Main Severn Terrace and is considered to be of Mousterian age. This occurs at Callow End, Powick, St. John's, Henwick, Perdiswell Park, Claines, Cornmeadow Green and Bilford Lane. After the fourth glaciation (Welsh Re-advance) the melt waters formed the Worcester Terrace and at that time the River Teme probably took its

¹ *The Victoria County History of Worcestershire* (1906) Vol. II, p. 197.

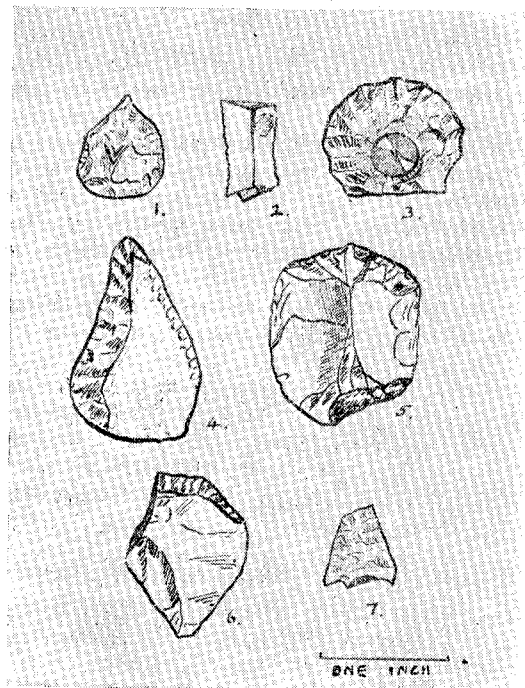
² G. B. Grundy, *Arch. J.*, XCII (1), 98, 1935.

³ P. H. L'Estrange *Trans. Worcs., Nat. Club*, VII (ii), 113, 1919.

⁴ L. J. Wills, *The Palaeogeography of the Midlands* (Hodder & Stoughton) 1948.

easterly course to the Severn. This terrace appears at Upton, Lower Wick, under most of Worcester, Barbourne, Worcester Sewerage Works and Sands Farm, Hartlebury Common.

One of the first Palæolithic implements to be found was the late Acheulian-type hand-axe which was reported by the Author and E. J. Bowen in 1915 and subsequently described by Reginald A. Smith,¹



Typical flint implements from the Worcester, Malvern
and Hartlebury districts.

It was not found *in situ* but traced to the origin of the gravel namely Henwick Pit. [National Grid 6-inch to mile reference 32/836 (.5), 558]. It was rolled and pitted and thus probably older than the gravel deposit. Many visits to the pit and those adjacent failed to reveal further specimens. Other Palæolithic implements come from the river bed between Hallow and Camp, the Worcester Sewerage Works and from Earl's Court, Worcester. The last site is some two miles west of the City beyond Laugherne Brook. The gravels

¹ R. A. Smith, *Archaeologia* LXXII, 25, 1921-22.

concerned here are not recorded. A Le Moustier-type implement comes from the Nursery in St. John-in-Bedwardine parish, Worcester. Further correlation of these local gravels and their relative ages would appear to be desirable. Some work in this direction has been published by J. W. Gray¹ and a comprehensive survey of the whole Severn Valley has been made by L. J. Wills.²

Concerning the Neolithic and Bronze Ages, remains in agricultural districts tend to be largely ploughed out and scattered. In valleys, the soil accumulation due to some centuries of wind drift is sufficient to conceal site horizons well below normal plough level. On hilly ground the reverse is true and wind and rain expose the contents of the thin soil.

When studying the later flint implements of the West Midlands it is obvious that with some exceptions the types are less pronounced and datable than specimens from the East Midlands or Lincolnshire.

In this article seven typical flint implements found by the Author are described; specimen No. 7 was presented to Malvern Museum some years ago.

- No. 1: Small leaf arrow-head of Neolithic type from Hartlebury Common—map ref.: 32/822, 706 (.5).
- No. 2: Flake with serrated edge of Neolithic or possible Mesolithic type found near it. On examination of a number of small worked flakes from this area at least one³ exhibits Tardenoisian features. L. J. Wills⁴ mentions worked flakes being found there and J. Allies⁵ records "immediately beneath the brow of the hill are a number of mounds, in appearance like tumuli" and as a footnote: "stone arrow(head)s have been found near to these mounds". Unfortunately, he does not give a clue to the types. Wills points out that Hartlebury Common is not wholly natural country having been profoundly interfered with by man in sand and gravel digging. He attributes the blown sand to both human and natural causes.
- No. 3: A scraper of Neolithic or, more probably, Early Bronze Age from St. John's, Worcester 32/825(.5), 545(.5). The protruding conical whorl is a special case of conchoidal fracture occasionally experienced by flint knappers. Such defects are rarely seen in finished implements. From the City side of Laugherne Brook near here and extending east of Boughton Park Golf Course towards Lower Wick is the site of the formerly extensive Nurseries where many of W. Bruton's specimens were found.

¹ J. W. Gray, *Trans. Worcs. Nat. Club*, VI (i), 65, 1914.

² L. J. Wills, *The Pleistocene development of the Severn from Bridgnorth to the Sea*. Q.J.G.S. XCIV, 161, 1938.

³ A. R. Bowen, *Arch. News Letter*, 2 (9), 141, 1950.

⁴ L. J. Wills, *Proc. Birm. Nat. Hist. and Phil. Soc.* XV, (5), 95, 1926.

⁵ Jabez Allies *Antiquities and Folk Lore of Worcs.* 2nd Edition 1852.

- No. 4: A flint knife with plain flake underside, again probably of Early Bronze Age. It was found on the terrace over-looking the River Severn between the Lyth and Winnall in Ombersley parish.
- No. 5: A scraper roughly made from a thickish flake of indefinite age—Early Bronze Age or Neolithic, from Ankerdine Hill 32/736(.5), 566(.5). The pathway and any bare patches on the Hill on the north side of the summit often yield flakes. Near this scraper was found also a thin flake with two edges blunted by secondary chipping.
The position is one commanding extensive views and with spring water near.
- No. 6: A scraper probably of Bronze Age from the col between the North Hill and North End Hill, Malvern 32/766(.5), 467. This site for years has produced odd flakes. The flakes are difficult to see among the quartz fragments especially when of pale colour. w 541
22 993
- No. 7: The major part of a small Bronze Age type arrow-head from the same site as No. 6. A flake, two inches long, was found near the summit of the North Hill on the east side. w 94
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Other flint implements,¹ that have been exhibited or described from this area are:—

A single barb or shouldered arrow-head: St. John's, Worcester.
Neolithic arrow-heads: St. John's, Worcester.
Neolithic scraper: Kepax.²

Bronze Age arrow-heads: Ombersley.
St. John's, Worcester
(especially from Nursery).
North Hill, Malvern.³
Bastonford.⁴

Flint scrapers are very numerous and it is difficult to say if they are of Bronze Age, Neolithic or even earlier.

Specimens are reported from St. John's (one double-ended), Perry Wood, Merriman's Hill⁵, Oldbury (Worcester), Upper Wick, Lower Wick, Crown East, Ankerdine, Leigh Court (a small specimen), Ombersley, Lineholt, Hartlebury⁶, Midsummer and Hollybush Hills⁷.

Other flint implements include:—crescent and circular knives,

¹ W. H. Edwards, *Trans. Birm. Arch. Soc.* XLI, 1, 1915.

² W. J. Else, *Trans. Worcs. Nat. Club*. IX, (3) 188, 1935-37.

³ W. J. Else, *Trans. Worcs. Nat. Club*, IX (3), 188, 1935-37.

⁴ W. H. Edwards, *Trans. Worcs. Nat. Club* 5, 44, 1911-13.

⁵ B. Brotherton *Trans. Worcs. Nat. Club*, VII (v), 361, 1922.

⁶ J. Humphreys *ibid*, VII (iii), 205, 1920.

⁷ I. T. Hughes, *Trans. Worcs. Nat. Club* VIII (2) 108, 1924.

discoidal flints and hollow scrapers from St. John's¹. W. A. Seaby² points out the resemblance between a Henwick flint axe and the specimen from St. John's and "Thames picks". Stone axes are receiving some attention at the present time; one basalt axe is reported from the Sewerage Works, Worcester. Two transverse arrow-heads were in river dredgings³ and a flint hammer is reported from Perry Wood. Besides these places other worked flints and implements are reported from Gorse Hill, Tunnel Hill, Elbury Hill, Blackpole, Dines Green, Broadheath, Warndon, Trench Wood, British Camp and the west side of the Worcestershire Beacon.

Worcester and Malvern have yielded a number of bronze implements^{4, 5} and cinerary urns. Palstaves come from Malvern Link, West Malvern and Ombersley; lance-heads and cinerary urns from Mathon and a small urn with zig-zag corded line decoration outside and inside the lip was found at the summit of the Worcestershire Beacon. Some of the Mathon urns are described as nearly cylindrical which would suggest the Late Bronze Age. In Worcester a socketed celt⁶ was found in the Castle mound.

Of the Early Iron Age much could be written of the Malvern area and much is still to be discovered. The great camps^{7, 8} on the Herefordshire Beacon and Midsummer and Hollybush Hills are considered to have been replanned and the defences multiplied by invaders with an Iron Age⁹ B culture coming from the south-west.¹⁰ Fragments of pottery¹¹ have been found and recorded. The gold coronet¹² or bracelet from Burstner's Cross (near Wynd's Point) is now almost legendary, but of the two currency bar hoards¹³ found between the Wyche and Great Malvern some specimens survive to-day. These are fully discussed by J. N. Friend¹⁴ who quotes correspondence about them. A bronze torc (threaded with iron wire) came from Perdiswell.¹⁵

A ring headed pin from Holt was illustrated by J. Allies and described by G. C. Dunning.¹⁶ Worcester has but few Early Iron Age relics.

¹ W. H. Edwards, *Trans. Birm. Arch. Soc.* *XLI*, 1, 1915.

² W. A. Seaby, *Arch. News Letter* 2, (6), 85, 1949.

³ W. J. Else, *Trans. Worcs. Nat. Club*, *IX*, (3), 188, 1935-37.

⁴ J. E. H. Blake, *Trans. Birm. Arch. Soc.* *XXXIX*, 90, 1913.

⁵ J. E. H. Blake, *Trans. Birm. Arch. Soc.* *XL*, 83, 1914; and *Trans. Worcs. Nat. Club VI* (ii) 149, 1915.

⁶ Jabez Allies, *Antiquities and Folk Lore of Worcs.* 2nd Edition, 1852.

⁷ I. T. Hughes, *Trans. Worcs. Nat. Club*, *VIII*, (2), 108, 1924.

⁸ F. G. Hilton-Price, *J. Anthropological Inst.* Feb. 1881.

⁹ H. H. Lines, *The Ancient Camps on the Malvern Hills.* (Phillips & Probert).

¹⁰ Survey and Policy of Field Research in the Archaeology of Gt. Britain I Prehistoric and Early Historic Ages, etc. (Council Brit. Arch.) 1948.

¹¹ I. T. Hughes, *Trans. Worcs. Nat. Club*, *VIII*, (2), 108, 1924.

¹² Jabez Allies, *Antiquities and Folk Lore of Worcs.* 2nd Edition, 1852.

¹³ R. A. Smith, *Proc. Soc. Antiq.* (London) *XX*, 184, 1905; *XXVII* 69, 1915.

¹⁴ J. N. Friend *Trans. Worcs. Nat. Club*, *VII*, (ii), 99, 1919.

¹⁵ Jabez Allies, *Antiquities and Folk Lore of Worcs.* 2nd Edition, 1852.

¹⁶ G. C. Dunning, *Arch. J.*, *XCI* (2), 269, 1934.

J. Allies mentions an uninscribed silver British coin¹ found with Roman coins at Green Hill near Fort Royal. In the Cotton collection, on exhibition at Worcester some years ago, a "Corio" gold stater was labelled "found in the Severn at Worcester". This is a coin of the Dobunni, a non-Belgic tribe.² The specimen was flatter than the usual concavoconvex shape and has been illustrated.³ Early Romano-British pottery from Boughton Close has been reported by W. H. Knowles.⁴

Thus the former wooded nature of this district does not appear to have prevented widespread occupation during the later prehistoric periods. Many of the ancient sites will have been destroyed by the advancing industrialisation or profoundly disturbed by the market gardening and hop-growing of the district. Thus scattered remains may be all that are left to us in some cases, though sites away from towns may yet be identified by such modern techniques as air-photography and soil analysis.

I wish to express my thanks to Mr. C. W. Phillips, F.S.A., for the loan of maps of the district.

¹ Jabez Allies, *Antiquities and Folk Lore of Worcs.* 2nd Edition, 1852.

² D. Allen, *Archæologia* 90, 1944.

³ *Three Pears (Worcester Arts) Magazine* No. 5, 18, June 1930.

⁴ W. H. Knowles, *Trans. Worcs. Arch. Soc.* *X*, 58, 1933.