Acknowledgement

I am grateful to Professor John Coles for his helpful comments on the initial draft of this note. Professor Coles himself supports the concept of Iron Age flintworking as described by Smith, so it should be stressed that the views offered here are the sole responsibility of the present writer.

References


One of the main objectives of an illustrator of lithic artefacts is to produce 'readable' drawings. That is a drawing which describes how the artefact was knapped rather than just its superficial appearance. Obviously the first thing to get right (Martindell 1980) is the exact overall size and depth of the artefact, together with its character – for example a hand axe should have a more rugged character than a delicate long thin blade. When the outline of the artefact has been established the sequence of flake removals and retouch can be considered. In order to reproduce this on a drawing the illustrator must be able to recognise that some flake scars are no longer complete but have been truncated or invaded by other scars as shown in Fig.1.

FIG.1 COMPLETE AND TRUNCATED FLAKE SCARS

1a Complete flake scar
1b Bulbar end removed, leaving an area of shallow ripples
1c Distal end broken, leaving the tightly rippled area of the negative bulb
1d Longitudinally truncated flake scar
The illustration (Figs.2-4) of a Neolithic chisel or rod (butt end only) is an analysis of the order of the flake removals in the course of manufacture.

Fig. 2 shows the flatter, ventral face which was flaked first together with the probable order (1-10) of the removal of these flakes. It can be seen that these flake scars are substantially truncated; the negative bulbs would have been about 3 mm away from the present edge - see Fig. 1b.

Fig. 3a shows the four main steep flake removals (A-D) on the dorsal face which were responsible for this. The sequence of that flaking is also clearly shown: B invades scar A (and therefore succeeds A) and likewise scar D invades scar C. Flake X was removed at a final stage to thin or taper the butt.

Fig. 4 (ventral face) shows the areas of final trimming or retool subsequent to the removals 1-11 and possibly added to make the lateral edges straighter.

The understanding of the process of manufacture and order of flaking by the illustrator enables a much more realistic and descriptive drawing to be produced.

Reference

LITHICS IN A LANDSCAPE: THE NEOLITHIC AND BRONZE AGE IN THE PLoughSOIL OF NORFOLK
by Frances Healy
(Based upon a lecture given to the LSS in May 1980)

What follows are some of the results of research done for a Ph.D. thesis on the neolithic in Norfolk (Healy 1980). Norfolk itself is the most northerly county of East Anglia and, though an arbitrary division for prehistoric study, provides a fairly representative slice of the topography of the whole region. Relief is unemphatic. The solid core of the county consists of a chalk and greensand escarpment in the west overlain as it dips eastwards by boulder clays which cover most of the centre of the county and are in turn overlain in the north-east by now decalcified upper Devensian loess (Catt 1978, fig.1). Alluvial sand deposited on the chalk of south-west Norfolk and west Suffolk forms the distinctive micro-region of the Breckland (Sims 1978, fig.1). The edges