

PROFESSOR F.W. SHOTTON

by John Wymer

It is sad to relate that Professor F. W. Shotton died on 21st July 1990, only three weeks after returning the final draft to me of the joint paper which precedes this note. He was in poor health physically, but, with occasional lapses, as mentally sharp as ever. This note in our modest Newsletter is the last thing he wrote on the palaeoliths found in the Midlands; his first was sixty years before: 'Palaeolithic implements found near Coventry', in the Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society of East Anglia.

Fred Shotton's health had been failing for some years. A very tall, impressive man, he had become unsteady on his legs and could no longer walk round the local pits and observe the sections, but would relish others driving him to them so that he could see as much as possible and maintain contacts with the workmen and managers. It was thus that the hand-axes were recovered from Waverley Wood Farm Pit. This discovery of mint hand-axes made of andesitic tuff from beneath 'Wolstonian' till was something of a culmination of his long research on the Palaeolithic period in the Midlands and brought him much pleasure. To the end, he maintained that these 'Wolstonian' tills were not the same as the Anglian Stage tills of East Anglia, as the British Geological Survey had concluded. Whether this is so or not, his work on the Quaternary sediments and terraces of the Midlands has been a major contribution to Quaternary studies in Britain.

As Professor of Geology at the University of Birmingham from 1949, he witnessed the gradual growth of Quaternary studies, hitherto neglected by so many academics, and in many respects he was responsible for it. He was from 1971 Chairman of the British Section of the INQUA International Geological Correlation Programme Project 24 Quaternary Glaciations in the Northern Hemisphere. I met him frequently at these meetings and he usually had some plastic bags containing flint or quartzite palaeoliths to show me. He would ask me to suggest a date for various hand-axes and I think I finally convinced him that they could only be placed in a span of time that covered the whole of the Palaeolithic.

He was a Fellow of the Royal Society. There was only one archaeologist with a special interest in the Palaeolithic period who was once F.R.S. He did not inspire confidence in his fellows on the scientific content of his observations on palaeoliths or archaeology in general. F.W. Shotton has hopefully removed any such impressions from this august establishment.

RECENT FINDS FROM RAINBOW BAR AND SOME THOUGHTS ON SITE FORMATION

by A.J.Schofield

Introduction

The site of Rainbow Bar at Hill Head, Hampshire, has been known for many years and a large collection of artefacts, both Lower Palaeolithic and Mesolithic, has been recovered (Draper 1951). As Draper has previously described, the site lies at the outlet of the river Meon and comprises an area of muds and gravels often exposed at low tide. The area is central to a broad, shallow floodplain with low gravel cliffs 300m to the north-west and south-east. The artefacts described in this paper were found by the author following the severe January gales of 1990 and provided the opportunity to reconsider the material in the light of recent research into the effect of fluvial action on the structure and integrity of archaeological sites.

The collection of artefacts made by Draper (1951) has received surprisingly little attention, considering its size and apparent integrity (but see Roe 1981, 149-50; Shackley 1981, 6; and Jacobi 1981, 21 for brief comments). Draper described the collection as numbering over 1000 artefacts, most of which had a distinctive creamy white porcellaneous patina with slight iron stains. He suggested that the site covered an area of around two acres and was clearly defined except to the south-west, where at the lowest spring tides artefacts could still be collected some distance from the beach. Draper distinguished at least two periods of occupation, the earliest comprising very rolled Lower Palaeolithic material. This included ten hand-axes, with cores and flakes. Approximately fifty Mesolithic flakes were also found in the area, and were distinguished by the fact that, although patinated, they were not iron-stained as was the earlier material.

Flint Artefacts from the Site, 1990

The collection made by the author in January 1990 has much in common with Draper's material: four of the artefacts are heavily patinated, while three, including a hand-axe and an unpatinated flake, have iron stains. The material from the beach (NGR SU 5280 0240) includes a hand-axe and a heavily patinated flake. The hand-axe (Fig. 1) is 115mm long, 66mm wide, 29mm thick and weighs 230g. An area of cortex, visible at the butt end, appears to suggest a large pebble as the raw material and, if so, this might have been derived locally. Heavy patination covers the surface of the hand-axe except at the tip where two breaks have recently occurred, probably shortly prior to its recovery.

Shape is best described by a series of indices defined by Roe (1964, 261). The three most useful measures for the present implement are as follows: $B/L = 0.57$; $L1/L = 0.17$; $B1/B2 = 0.55$. The hand-axe is therefore relatively broad in outline and the shape best described as cordate, type JKf/vi in Wymer's (1985, 4)