

The experimental sample used in this study to identify the method of radial core rejuvenation was small and may not be the only means possible or even representative. Experimentation might reveal a range of options for enhancing the life of a radial core of which the topknot flake is just one strategy. Whether the technique is specific to vein quartz needs examining; the type of raw material, the hammer used and the skill of knapper may all affect the frequency of hinge fractures and thus the need to rejuvenate. Further experimentation is planned to assess the role of these variables.

Regardless of its temporal and spatial distribution, the topknot flake (or whatever term you prefer) demonstrates the potential of seemingly unpromising waste material to contribute to the study of human behaviour.

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Department of Classics and Archaeology, University of Bristol, 11 Woodland Road, Bristol.

A Waisted Axe from Bashley, Hampshire

Philippa Bradley

A polished stone axe was found by George Crees between Bashley and New Milton, near Christchurch, Dorset (around SZ 424096) approximately 10 years ago. It was subsequently brought to my attention and I am grateful to George Crees for allowing me to borrow the axe for study and publication. The axe was found in a stream bed after a period of heavy rainfall. Its very fresh condition may suggest that it had originally been deposited in a pit or similar feature, the heavy rainfall exposing the artefact.

The axe (Fig 1) is made from a hard, fine-grained rock, dark green in colour; brown areas on both faces may be staining or due to weathering of the original surface of the object. The material is probably of igneous or metamorphic origin. The axe is very finely made and much care has been taken over the final shaping and polishing. It is in good condition, there is slight damage to the blade. It measures 115 mm long (maximum) by 79 mm wide at the butt tapering to 44 mm at the blade. The axe is 45 mm thick at the butt end thinning towards the cutting edge. The grooves at the butt end would have facilitated hafting. The axe has been polished all over and striations are visible in at least two directions.

The closest British parallels for this type of axe are mauls and so-called mining tools which have a wide distribution and are generally thought to be Bronze Age in date (Pickin 1989, 39). These artefacts tend to be larger and cruder than the Bashley example. However, a group of mauls from Anglesey compare well with it (Lynch 1986, fig. 19, see especially no. 4). Other seemingly well-made but smaller grooved or waisted axes have been found, for example from Limpsfield, Sussex (Malden 1926, pl. 1a; Field and Woolley 1984 91, fig. 4, no. 27), Lound Run, Suffolk (Clough and Green 1972, fig. 13), Earl Shilton, Leicestershire (Vine 1982, 313, no.152) and a wedge from Palgrave, Suffolk bears some similarity of form (Clough and Green 1972, fig. 13).

Secure archaeological contexts for such artefacts are rare, all of the cited examples being stray finds. The example from Limpsfield is almost identical to the Bashley example in size and form. An ethnographic origin has, however, since been suggested for the Limpsfield axe, although it was originally published as archaeological (Clough and Cummins 1988, 170).

Even if an ethnographic origin is accepted for the Limpsfield axe, there is ample evidence for finely made waisted axes from Britain. These artefacts would appear to be allied to mauls and mining tools in form, but what of their function? Mauls and mining tools may have had several functions as, although

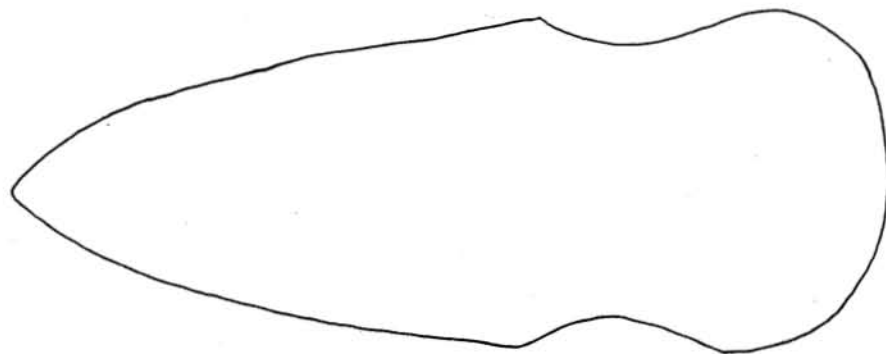
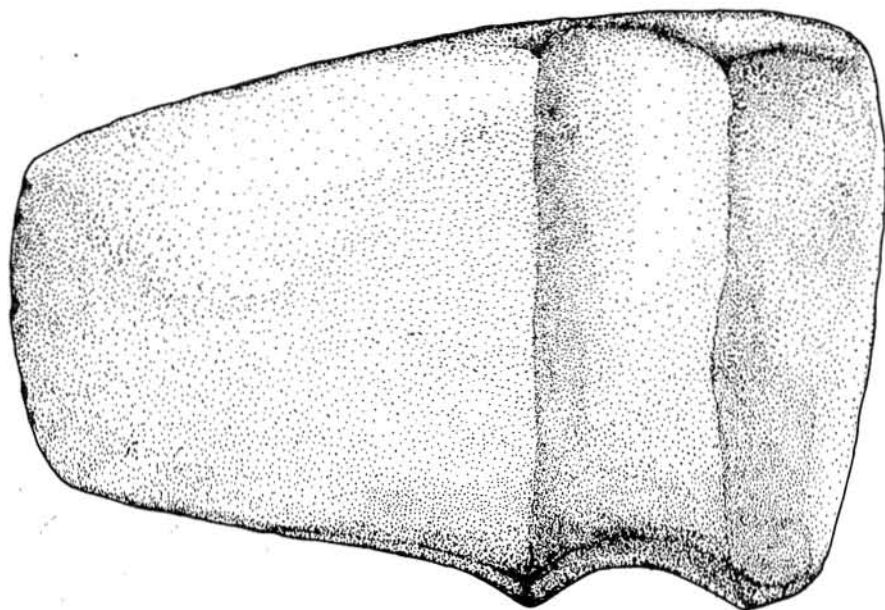


Figure 1: Waisted stone axe from Hampshire. Scale 1:1

many occur in metalliferous areas, direct association with ore extraction or processing is not always clear (Pickin 1989, 40). The waisted axe from Bashley appears to be unused; the damage to the tip is probably post-depositional. Further work may identify wear patterns allowing the functions of these artefacts to be elucidated. Battle-axes and shaft-hole axes have been linked with copper-working (Evens *et al.* 1962, 238; Roe 1967) although many examples are clearly prestige objects and do not show signs of wear. Finely made waisted axes, such as the example from Bashley, may be regarded as prestige items perhaps also linked with metal working. Further research into waisted axes, mauls and mining tools may clarify the uses of these artefacts.

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