

# SOME FLINTS FROM NEWPORT PAGNELL

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## Summary

In the course of systematic fieldwork along the line of the proposed Newport Pagnell by-pass at Caldecote carried out by members of the County Museum Archaeological Group in October 1976 and myself in May 1977, a small scatter of struck flints was identified. A total of twenty-six was recovered and all are illustrated here.

## Acknowledgements

I owe my thanks to the landowner Mr. G. Morgan for access and to Mr. M. Farley, County Museum Field Archaeologist, for his assistance. The flints are retained at the Museum (271.76) and (498.78), CAS.2519.

## The Site

The site is located on the light loams of the level lower gravel terrace of the River Ouzel at SP 88124270 (Fig. 1). There is an abundance of natural flint lying on the surface but of very poor quality, being always brittle and heavily patinated. All the struck flint has a fine character and dark lustrous appearance, and since no unstruck examples of this material were found, they had clearly all been imported. The only other published group from the valley of broadly similar period are those from the Milton Keynes ring ditch,<sup>1</sup> and it is hard at present to envisage intensive occupation in such an area, close to the Ouzel's confluence with the Ouse, that must have been exposed and prone to flooding. Extensive excavation is much needed to help illuminate the nature of settlement on these gravels.

## The Flints (Fig. 2)

The assemblage is a very tiny one and whether an industry flourished it is impossible to judge. But by comparison to flint scatters from elsewhere, utilised pieces predominate, which favours the supposition that they were introduced prefabricated.

1-4. Short end scrapers. These conform to Class A as developed for the Durrington material.<sup>2</sup>

5. Leaf-shaped arrowhead. The specimen is fragmentary and the retouch, though bifacial, is somewhat casual.

6. Chopping tool. An adze implement with retouch along one edge to produce a wedge.

1. H. Stephen Green, 'Early Bronze Age Burial, Territory and Population in Milton Keynes, Bucks, and the Great Ouse Valley', *Arch.J.*, 131 (1974), 83-87.

2. G.J. Wainwright and I.H. Longworth, 'Durrington Walls: Excavations 1966-68', *Rep.Res. Comm.Soc. Ants.*, XXIX (1971), 164.

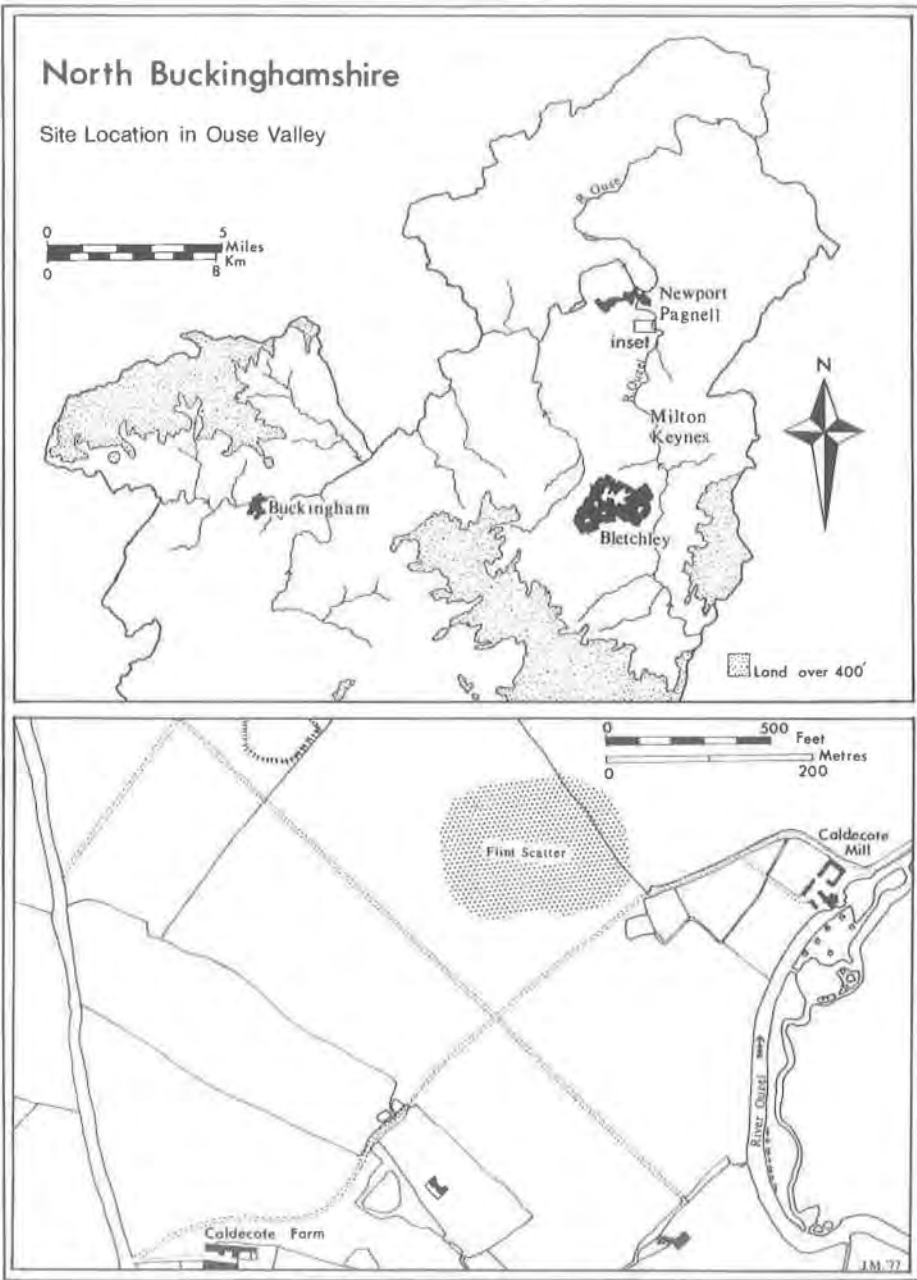


Fig. 1. Site location.

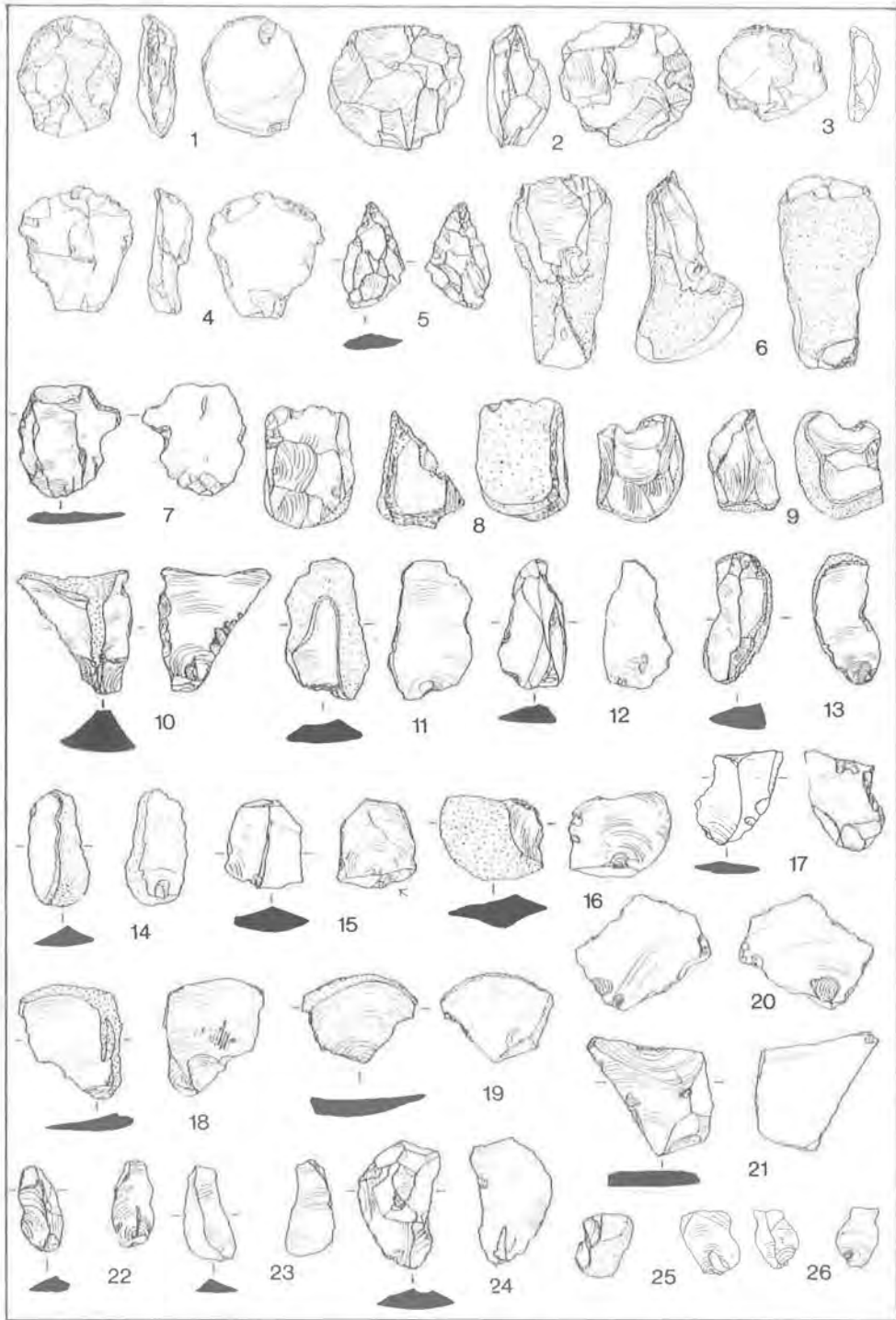


Fig. 2. Flints, scale 1/2.

7. Borer formed by careful working along one edge of a flake to leave a notch.
- 8, 9. Cores. Belong to the common partially flaked variety.<sup>3</sup>
12. Small blade with slight flat edge retouch.
- 10, 11, 13-26. Waste flakes.

### Discussion

It is not possible to date firmly such a tiny sample typologically because their diagnostic characteristics are few and undistinguished, or stratigraphically as they do not derive from excavated contexts. For example leaf-shaped arrowheads are normally Neolithic but, probably due to cultural conservatism, were found with barbed and tanged arrowheads at the Beaker period site of Belle Tout.<sup>4</sup> Smaller scrapers are often expected to fall with the second millenium B.C.<sup>5</sup> but it may be just simple chance that the four from Caldecote fall within the Beaker range.

### Addendum

This site was utilised as a sample to test the significance of surface scatters of flint flakes and tools in plough soil, which it was anticipated might indicate the existence of a settlement. An area 10 m. x 64 m. was stripped of plough soil by machine in June, 1978 and the resultant surface, a gravelly sand, then trowelled clean. No archaeological features apart from mediaeval ridge and furrow were revealed. If there were structural features they must have been contained within the cultivated soil and hence destroyed long ago.

Since the discovery of this flint scatter, increasing numbers of similar scatters, often very extensive, have been found elsewhere in the county where intensive fieldwalking has taken place, so it seems likely that the majority may represent occasional resting or camping places rather than permanent settlement. The problem of establishing valid criteria for prediction of longer term settlement in the absence of crop marks or of pottery finds remains. The absence of pottery may have little significance in heavily ploughed land since prehistoric hand made wares are often friable and easily abraded.

The work at Newport Pagnell was carried out by Buckinghamshire County Museum in advance of construction of the Newport Pagnell by-pass through the kind co-operation of the landowner, Mr. Morgan, and of Buckinghamshire County Council Highways Department.

Michael Farley

3. J. G. D. Clark, 'Excavations at the Neolithic Site at Hurst Fen, Mildenhall, Suffolk', *Proc. Prehist. Soc.*, 26 (1960), 216.

4. R. Bradley, 'The Excavation of a Beaker Settlement at Belle Tout, East Sussex, England', *Proc. Prehist. Soc.* 36 (1970), 358.

5. G. J. Wainwright, 'The Excavation of a Neolithic Settlement on Broome Heath, Ditchingham, Norfolk, England', *Proc. Prehist. Soc.*, 38 (1972), 56.