

From the *Transactions* of the
Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

**A Palaeolith presumed to be from Charlton Abbots,
Gloucestershire**

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1984, Vol. 102, 219-221

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male. The degree of attrition of the teeth was less than that of the first skeleton; it was consistent with an age range of 25–40 years. The presence of some early signs of spondylosis of the lumbar spine suggests that the age of the skeleton was possibly at the upper end of this range. Only three lumbar vertebrae were present. There was a minimal degree of osteophytosis of the vertebral body margin and hollowing of the superior surface of a vertebral body. This is known as a Schmorl's node and is the result of herniation of the vertebral disc into the surface of the vertebra – a common disorder. No other abnormalities were noted apart from caries in a third lower molar.

The detailed notes and data on these two skeletons are to be deposited with the finds.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the following for their help in facilitating the watching brief and the production of this note: the engineering staff of the Thames Water Authority and its archaeologist, M. Hall; the contractors, Messrs Docwra, and particularly the pipe-laying team of Messrs J. and G. Baker and the J.C.B. operator Mr P. Reilly; A. Saville for his comments on the pottery and general assistance; and finally Dr J. Rogers for her report on the human remains.

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May 1984

BERNARD RAWES

Publication of this note has been aided by a grant from English Heritage

A PALAEOOLITH PRESUMED TO BE FROM CHARLTON ABBOTS, GLOS.

The implement which is the subject of this note was acquired recently by Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museums (accn. no. 1982:389) from the Buckinghamshire County Museum at Aylesbury, where it had been sent as part of the collection of the late Mr Bridgstock-Choat of Amersham.

The implement (FIG. 1) is a chunky, bifacially-flaked core tool, measuring 100 mm in length, by 62 mm in width, by 39 mm in thickness, and weighing 185 grams. The raw material is flint, which now has an ochreous yellow-brown colouration over the whole of the flaked surface. The implement is unrolled and in near sharp condition, and is complete except for a small chip at its broader end. Some minor recent edge damage (indicated by arrows on the illustration) allows the original grey colour of the flint to be seen. One terminal has been given a rounded, stubby point, and typologically the implement is best characterized as a handaxe, of somewhat small size and crude aspect, but acceptable within the variability of handaxes of Acheulian type from the English Lower Palaeolithic.

The only information on provenance accompanying the implement is a pencilled label reading 'Charlton Abbots'. This is assumed to indicate the place of finding, and the only Charlton Abbots known to the writer in southern England is the small Cotswold village at NGR SP 034242, 4 km south of Winchcombe and 8.5 km east of Cheltenham. Mrs V. Bridgstock-Choat kindly confirmed numerous visits to the Cotswolds with her late husband, but could supply no details relating to this implement. The village, in Sudeley parish, lies between 183–213 m (600–700 feet) above O.D., on the Cotswold scarp-edge at the head of the valley of the Beesmoor Brook. The area encompassed by the village has a variable geology of Middle and Upper Lias, Cotteswold

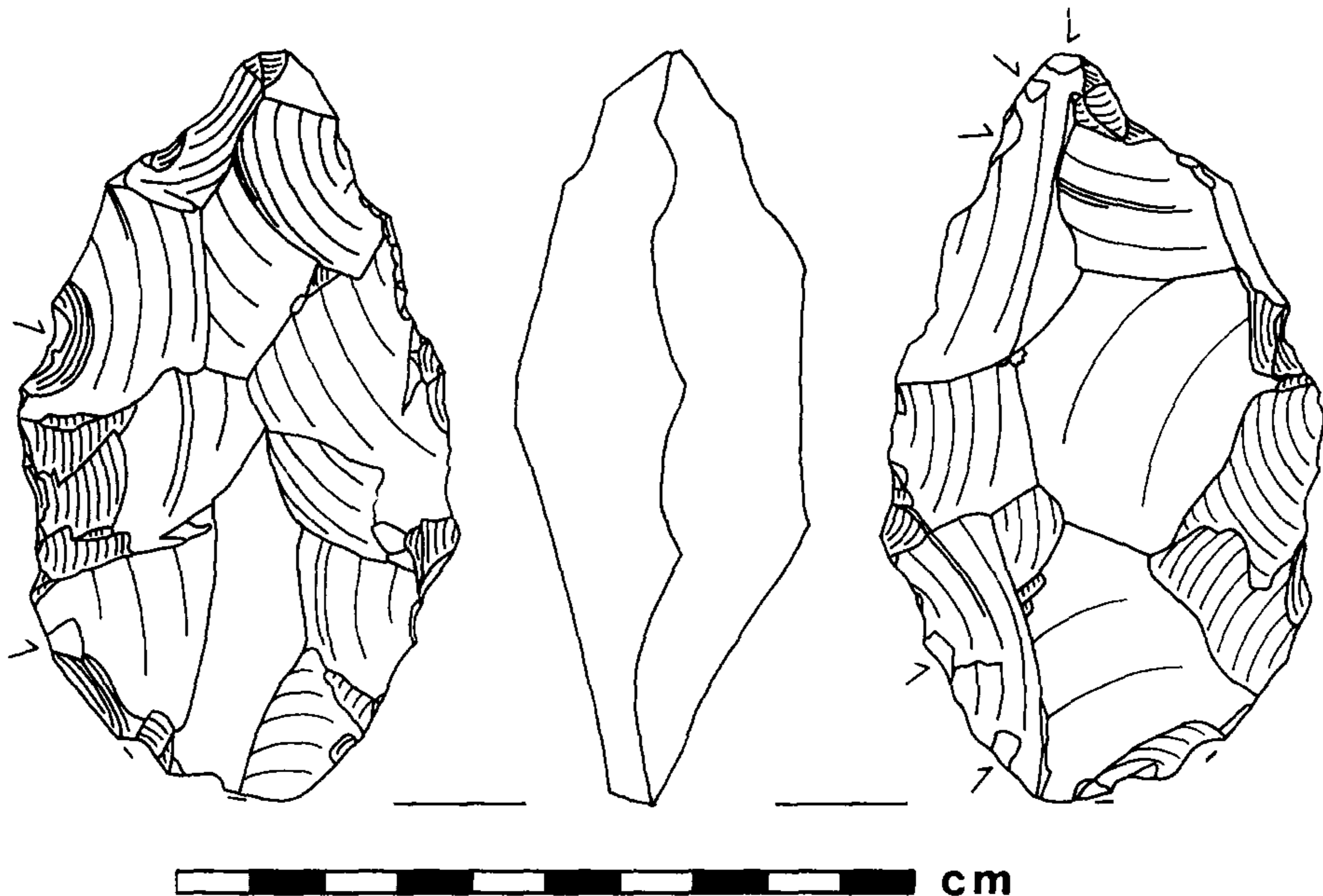


FIG. 1. Palaeolith from Charlton Abbots.

Sand, and Inferior Oolite. The colouration of the implement is anomalous for the Cotswolds, where flints usually acquire a dense white discolouration with time, and would be more consistent with a gravel deposit. Nevertheless, there could be a local explanation for this if the precise context of deposition were known, and Charlton Abbots must be accepted as the most probable place of archaeological origin, bearing in mind the customary provisos about modern losses from antiquarian collections.

Palaeolithic finds in Gloucestershire have previously been restricted to the low-lying gravel deposits of the rivers Severn and Thames and their tributaries. The only concentrations occur in the Barnwood area east of Gloucester, and along the Upper Thames, with outlying isolated finds at Bourton-on-the-Water (O'Neil 1965) and Brand Green near Upleadon (Posnansky 1963, 389). The Elkstone find in Stroud Museum, originally described as a handaxe in the note in *Archaeological Review* 4(1969)21, is in fact an edge-retouched flake which cannot be given any certain typological dating. There are, however, no intrinsic reasons why Palaeolithic occupation of the Cotswolds should not have occurred, at least during the Hoxnian and Ipswichian interglacials, and the importance of the Charlton Abbots find is that it could be the first indication of such occupation. Certainly the unworn condition of the handaxe suggests that it was found virtually *in situ* (cf. Wymer and Straw 1977, 359), and this might in turn suggest a post-Wolstonian dating, given the likelihood of harsh erosional conditions on the northern Cotswolds during that glaciation.

Acknowledgements

I am most grateful to Mr G.C. Lamb of the Buckinghamshire County Museum for passing the palaeolith to Cheltenham, to Mrs V. Bridgstock-Choat for her donation of the find and for helpful correspondence, and to Mr G. Breeze, Director of Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museums, for encouraging the publication of this note. Mr L. Walrond facilitated my examination of material in Stroud Museum.

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January 1983

ALAN SAVILLE

A SECOND INTAGLIO FROM THE DITCHES SITE,
NORTH CERNEY, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Fieldwalking by Mrs Frances Saunders of Woodmancote has produced a second intaglio find (PLATE I) from the Ditches site, North Cerney. The gem has kindly been donated to the Corinium Museum, Cirencester, by the landowner, Mr H. Robinson of Moorwood, Woodmancote. The gem has been given the accession number 1982/20/2.



1 Cm

PLATE I

Iron ring with red jasper intaglio from the Ditches, North Cerney.