

THE DISCOVERY OF PREHISTORIC IMPLEMENTS AT DANECROFT, STOWMARKET.

BY COLONEL ST. JOHN F. M. FANCOURT, C.B.

In July, 1907, I made an interesting discovery of prehistoric stone implements in my garden at Danecroft, one and a half miles from Stowmarket, Suffolk.

The circumstances connected with the finding of the stones.

At intervals of years the remains of Saxon men, horses and arms have been found in the neighbourhood of Stowmarket; generally a few feet below the surface, and in a stone pit the tusks and bones of a prehistoric elephant. When digging wells and ponds at Danecroft, I had been surprised at the numbers of flakes of flint and curiously shaped stones which were thrown out, but as I was not at that time interested in prehistorical subjects, they failed to fix my attention; but this summer, while superintending the transplanting of a tree, I picked up some flints which were apparently arrow and javelin heads. My curiosity was excited, and on looking about near wherever digging had taken place, I found on the surface of the garden soil numbers of similar arrow-shaped flints, as well as a few cut or chipped tomahawks and hammers.

I then opened a hole five feet in diameter—one man dug, another broke up and sifted out the stones, and a third scrubbed them free from the adhesive clay—with results which are given in the analysis of the contents of the pit. The eminent scientists, Professors Flinders Petrie

The course of investigation as to their value.

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and Rutot, were kind enough to examine specimens of the stones as well as the clay in which they were found, and they pronounced an almost similar judgment, viz., they were stones worked into implements by prehistoric man, and they were of a type usually associated with the Eolithic and Lower Palæolithic periods. Both scientists discarded my suggestion that the stones, as well as being cut for use, had also been made to resemble certain animals and birds of prehistoric times, and M. Rutot remarked that he considered it was beyond doubt that man in Eolithic times was ignorant of art. It may be useful to mention that it was assumed that I claimed to have found sculptures of animals' heads which had been chipped in Eolithic or Lower Palæolithic eras. The suggestion that I put forward was that certain stones had been found cut by man, and were not tools, implements or weapons, and they in many cases bore a pronounced resemblance to prehistoric animals. I was entirely ignorant as to their chronology, except in so far as they had been found with implements of Lower Palæolithic type.

The resemblance to animals' heads not admitted by Professors Petrie and Rutot.

M. Rutot states that the cave dwellers of the Quaternary era were succeeded by the Tardenoisien, a people who made very small implements. I found hundreds of such small implements in the Danecroft pit.

The weapons found at Danecroft should be classed as those of a people who used Eolithic implements in the Neolithic age.

M. Rutot mentions that the Tardenoisien were driven out of their continental homes by a race whose implements were Eolithic in type, when all other Continental people were using those of the improved Neolithic ground and polished type. The great Prehistorian calls these people Flénusien. In places where they made settlements M. Rutot has found Tarde-

noisien, Eolithic, Palæolithic and Neolithic patterns of chipped and ground implements and weapons, with the exception of arrow heads, which were conspicuously absent. The contents of the Danecroft pit at the six feet to nine feet level almost exactly corresponded with the description given by M. Rutot of Flénusien remains. Professor Petrie also remarked on the diversity in age and pattern of the implements from Danecroft which he was kind enough to examine.

I had classed the small implements found at Danecroft as women's and children's knives, scrapers, nut-crackers, pickers and chisels, because they were made on exactly similar patterns to those of the larger size, only they were more highly finished. The explanation of M. Rutot that these small implements are racial is most satisfactory, for they are very much in advance of the large implements both in make and finish; moreover, they are found with highly finished stones which represent animals' heads. Some of these *pierres figures* have square holes drilled by a cutting tool in their bases with a mathematical accuracy which could not be excelled in the present day. Some of the implements found at Danecroft are similar in pattern to those found at Campigny, Ghlin and Elouges, but the majority are of the St. Acheul type, and distinctly Palæolithic.

It appears to be generally believed by English prehistorians, that when the old world was involved in some great upheaval of nature, which caused the separation of Ireland from England and the latter from the Continent, the ancient inhabitants, men and animals, were virtually destroyed. That when our England later on assumed its present topographical

England, after separation from the Continent, was repopulated by a small race of people from the east.

aspect, it was repopulated by a small race of men from the Continent, who had previously colonised all the western and southern countries of Europe. This race was far advanced in civilisation; they brought with them domesticated animals and had some knowledge of agriculture and art. An examination of the stones at Danecroft will, I think, prove that such a race lived there in early times.

The small race who repopulated England were conquered by a more powerful and ruder race.

It is further believed that the eastern county tribes of this race were conquered by savage tribes from the north of Europe, while those in the western counties died out or were driven into Wales. Even in Cæsar's time such a tradition was an accepted belief. The implements and weapons found near the surface at Danecroft are all of the Eolithic and Palæolithic type, characteristic of the Flamisien round head races.

The topography of the Gipping in the neighbourhood of Danecroft.

At the place where the stones were found, the valley of the Gipping does not appear to have been subjected to any violent convulsion of nature. There are traces that in flood the early Gipping at Danecroft was twenty feet above the level of the present stream, and the trace of the old permanent river bed in the Abbott's Hall meadows shows it was a deep river, which in flood would be blocked there by fallen trees and debris, and spread out to a "broad" up to the house at Danecroft, and there be contained to the north by the high bank of what is now the Finborough Road.

From a topographical point of view, there is no reason why such a river as the prehistoric Gipping, rising in a plateau watershed densely wooded and subject to a heavy rainfall, should not have cut out a deep and wide bed such as has been described above. Indeed, it might be

expected to do so in the early Neolithic age of the world, for this Suffolk plateau watershed appears to have streamed water into the lowlands until they must have become uninhabitable. The quantity of bog oak seems to point to this part of the valley having been under water or a bog in historical times.

It is much to be regretted that the Danecroft pit was not examined by a geologist. I failed to secure the services of anyone qualified to give an opinion; all that can be claimed for my description is, that it is the carefully kept record of a trained observer. A truthful report from a non-professional observer is generally of some value to experts. In my own profession military history owes much to the reports of war correspondents ignorant of the great science of war, or of the technical terms in which it should be described.

DESCRIPTION OF A HOLE 5 FEET IN DIAMETER
AND 20 FEET DEEP, DUG AT DANECROFT.

Surface soil to 1 foot, then mixed with clay; contained a few chips of flint and a few stones. Meadow surface.

Brick clay and mud undisturbed for many years, which required a pick to dig. When repeatedly washed, the mud and clay gave a residue of very fine gravelly sand, containing numbers of minute shells, some small cornelians, an oyster shell, a piece of finely polished amber. 2 feet to 3 feet.

At 3 feet, brick clay requiring a pick, changing to dusky white, easy to dig with a spade, contained a bronze the size of a crown, a piece of bog oak, a number of Palæolithic type of stone weapons fresh and sharp, some "pushers" and "scrapers," some large flints 3 feet to 4 feet.

roughly chipped, numbers of chips, bits of bone and wood, fresh water shells, bits of iron ore, small pieces of rolled chalk.

4 feet to
5 feet.

Dusky white clay easy to dig. Contained hundreds of flint weapons and implements of Palæolithic type not water worn. Numbers of small, well-finished implements quite fresh. Many broken shells, large and small. Some small flakes of ironstone, cut or broken into triangles. Bits of what appeared to be meteoric iron. Pigments of red and yellow, which dyed the hands when touched. Lumps of stuff resembling half-burnt seaweed. Very small pieces of bone and wood, very brittle. A few belemnites. White pebbles of various sizes, which appeared to have been deignedly marked red with a pigment made from the scraping of pyrites; when heated they became black, and on cooling resumed the red colour. Some burnt pebbles and stones.

5 feet to
6 feet.

Dark or dusky yellow adhesive clay, which was dug out in blocks a foot square. Contained many rolled chalks of small size. Many fine implements of black flint, quite fresh. A few large and thick fresh-water shells of great age, which broke into flakes when roughly touched. A number of implements, some crusted with plateau chalk, others fresh, both of Eolithic and Palæolithic types. Large numbers of pigmy implements. Some large blocks of flint, well cut and chipped.

6 feet to
9 feet.

Brick clay mixed with mud, difficult to dig, and at times requiring a pick. Containing large blocks of flint, all cut and chipped; large anvils, hammers, strikers and pounders; some well-made scrapers and planes, finely polished. Belemnites, large and small. Chalk-crusted flints, with sea urchin marking. Brown flint

scrapers of Eolithic pattern, with the impression of shells stamped in the flint. A few large fresh-water shells.

Light brown clay. Contained much the same as above, except that the larger size of implements and weapons entirely ceased, and implements were found in larger numbers. At 12 feet a neatly shaped triangle of conglomerate, 1 foot by 2 inches thick, was turned up. 9 feet to
12 feet.

Moist clay dug out in blocks a foot square, containing numbers of implements in skins of adhesive clay, which could only be removed by scrubbing with a hard brush. Though uniform in pattern, some were crusted with white chalk, and much water worn; others were sharp, well coloured, some polished, others unpolished. Hundreds were found at the 13 feet level. Many sand stones, many white pebbles. 12 feet to
14 feet.

Ochreous sand, containing some ochreous implements of medium sizes, and well finished. 14 feet to
15 feet.

Two feet of the purest cream coloured sand, which contained neither stones, pebbles nor shells, with the exception of one much rolled small scraper of Eolithic pattern. 15 feet to
17 feet.

Chocolate coloured coarse sea beach sand, which stained whatever it touched. Pockets of dark red iron stone much decomposed. Pockets of mica. No trace of chalk, belemnites or bone. The gravel or sand contained about fifty implements of Paleolithic pattern. 17 feet to
18½ feet.

Dark red sand mixed with iron ore, slightly damp, which broke up into slabs 6 inches to one foot in size on digging it out. Large slabs of ochreous mica, a few well-made implements and figures stained a deep iron colour, with iron black crystals adhering to them, which had to be removed with a chisel and hammer. 18½ feet to
20 feet.

20 feet to
22 feet.

A flooring of ore about six inches thick was reached at 20 feet, which it required a pick to break up, and then water came through. On removing the iron pan the digger had to work in water of a deep iron tint. He removed about 2 feet more in depth of iron tinted sand, which did not contain stones or pebbles. In a few days the sand settled down and there was two feet of clear sparkling water. The point (20 feet from the surface) where water was reached is just about the same level as the present bed of the Gipping, which flows through a meadow about 400 yards to the south.

As the hole proved to be dangerous for further digging, it was converted into a well, and gives an excellent and pure supply of good water.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMPLEMENTS FOUND.

The imple-
ments follow
certain pat-
terns irrespec-
tive of size or
material.

I may mention that all the stone implements found at Danecroft are made on "patterns," whether they are cut in flint or quartz, whether water rolled and white with age or apparently unused and polished, whether made for the hold of a little child or the grasp of a giant—though the size or material may be altered, the pattern is constant.

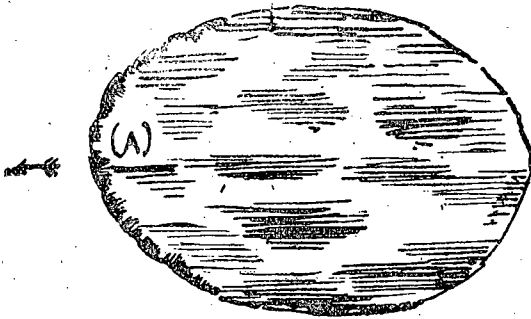
Scrapers.
Illustration
No. 1.

Wherever stone implements have been found in England, the scraper and the celt have generally been predominant, but curiously enough, in the Danecroft pit they are scarce. The scrapers I have found are the usual kind, oyster shell shape, but some are marked with a shell.

Planes.

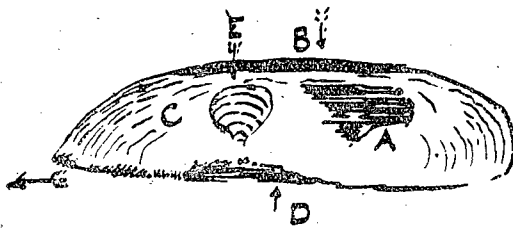
Great numbers of an implement, which may be called a plane, have been found. They are not figured in standard English books, nor have

ILLUSTRATION No. 1. SCRAPER.



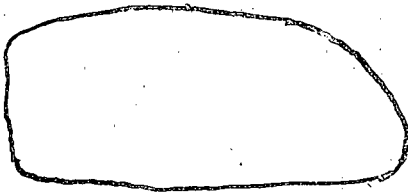
Sole of scraper traced
Black flint. Bished
(A) Sharpened gused edge

† Scale.



Profile of scraper
(A) Place for thumb cut
(B) Top cut smooth
(C) Natural grey crust
(D) Base flat smooth
g polished
(E) mark of a shell

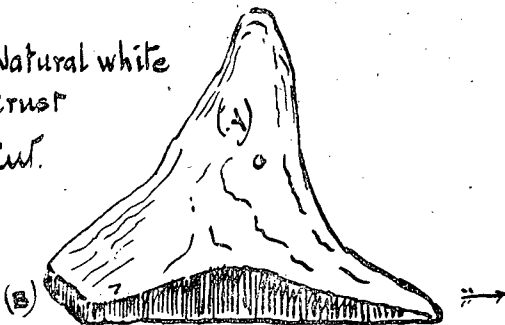
ILLUSTRATION No. 2.
SOLE OF COCKED HAT PLANE TRACED.



→
Scale †

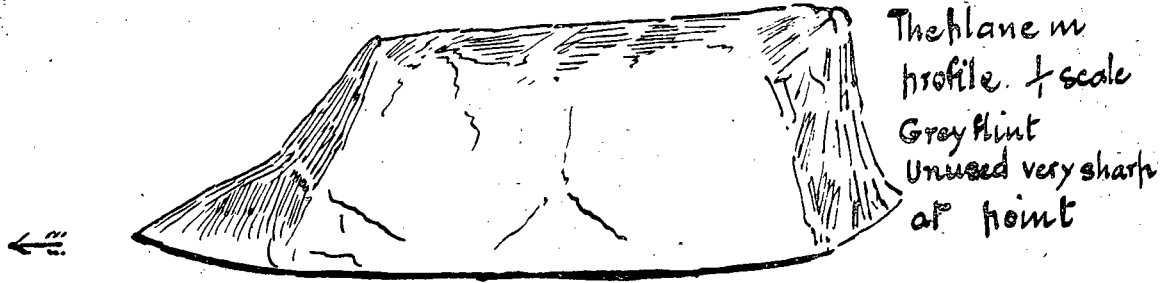
(A) Natural white
crust

(B) Cut.

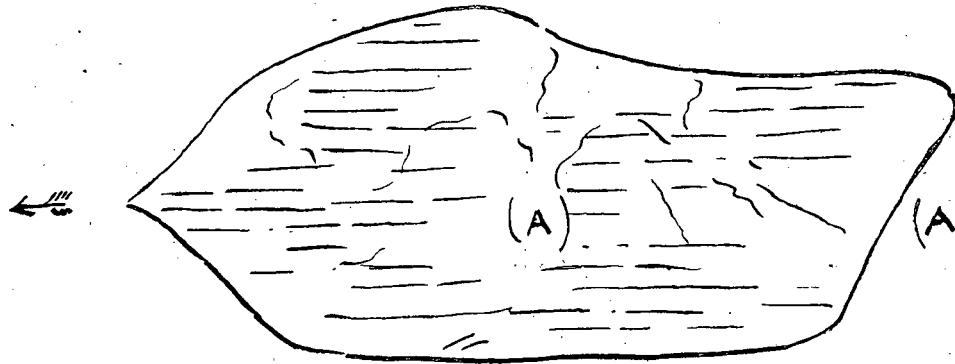


Profile of cocked hat plane. Scale †

ILLUSTRATION No. 3.



The plane in
profile. $\frac{1}{4}$ scale
Gray flint
Unused very sharp
at point

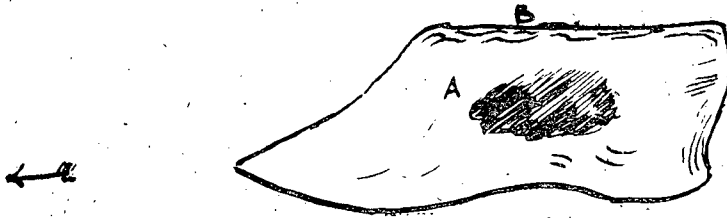


(A) Flat &
polished sole

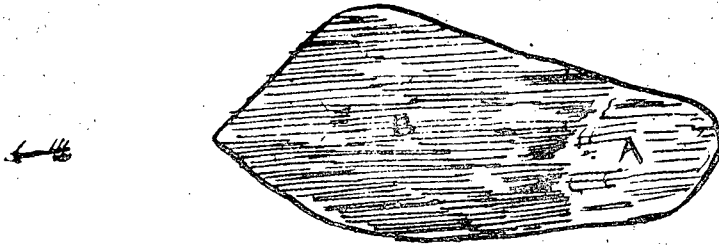
Tracing of the sole of a plane full size $\frac{1}{4}$ scale

ILLUSTRATION No. 4.

Scale +



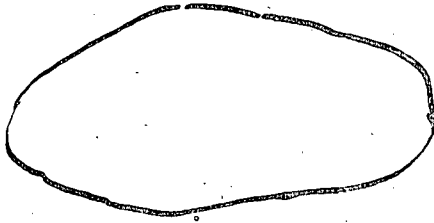
- (1) Profile of the small plane
(A) cut to black flint
(B) ridge of brown crust



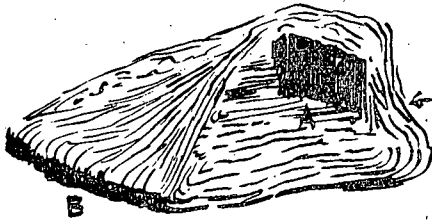
- (A) Natural brown crust
(B) Cut to the black flint
smooth & polished

(2) Tracing of the sole of small plane (wooden shoe class)

ILLUSTRATION No. 5. MOCASSIN PLANE.



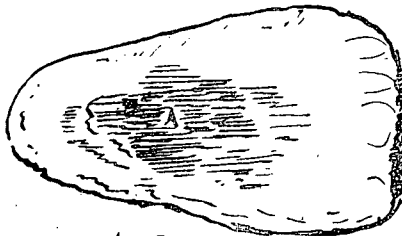
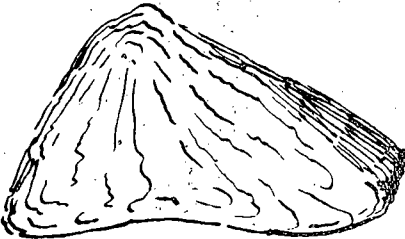
Tracing of the sole, quite flat & highly polished & scale



(A) Hollowed out for thumb
(B) Cut to give shape to the sole

Profile of Moccasin plane full size

ILLUSTRATION No. 6.
PYRAMID-SHAPED PLANE.



A Hollowed out



Tracing of the sole of Pyramid plane

I been able to find them in English Museums, but the Brussels Natural History Museum has a fine collection similar to those discovered at Danecroft.

They are flat underneath, with a front cutting edge, which cuts by the plane being held in the hand and pushed along.

The seal patterns for Planes appear to be—

1st. The shape of a cocked hat with a natural hold for hand. This pattern is made in a variety of stones; the size differs, but it is mostly about 1 inch high by 2 inches long. The base is polished either by grinding or wear; in some the upper part is also polished.

Illustration
No. 2.

2nd. The shape of a box-iron without the handle. The largest size can be grasped with the whole hand; the point is sharp and the base smooth. The smaller sizes have only room for finger and thumb.

Illustration
No. 3.

3rd. The shape of a wooden shoe, the sole and sometimes the upper part polished. The shell or outer crust of the flint has been elaborately cut in many cases, and is polished by use, especially where the thumb and fingers have been applied.

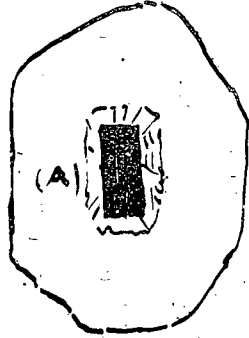
Illustration
No. 4.

4th. The shape of a moccasin (illustration No. 5).

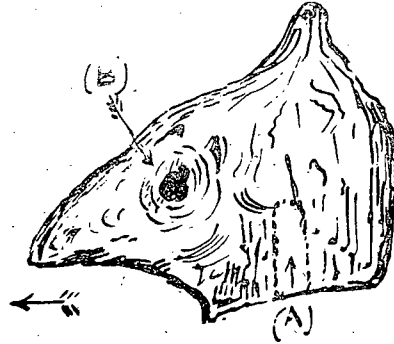
Illustrations
No. 5 and
No. 6.

5th. The shape of a pyramid (illustration No. 6). The upper or holding part of the plane has only an artistic interest. The working base has as many shapes as the sole of a modern boot. There is the sharp-pointed toe with a hollow before reaching the heel; the broad, flat toe with no heel; the round, broad toe, also with no heel; and the hob-nailed sole with an uneven surface. They have one and all been modelled on the shape of the sole of a man's foot, and so accurately that they would be useful

ILLUSTRATION No. 7.



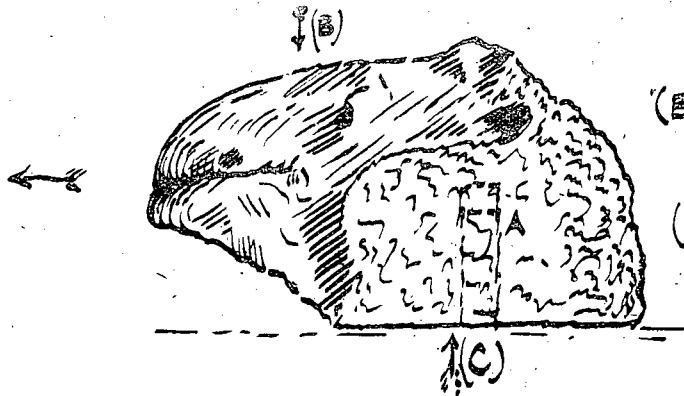
Tracing of base of Bird Hat
and polished
(A) Deeply cut hole



Bird like head in profile
(B) Deeply bored eye.
(A) Position of boring in base

ILLUSTRATION No. 8.

Head of a sheep like animal in profile, with hole bored in base. Scale $\frac{1}{2}$.



- (A) White Crust. unpolished.
- (B) Deeply cut (where shaded) is the brown flint and polished
- (C) Hole bored in base which is flat & polished.
A stick inserted at C holds the totem aloft

to a modern bootmaker. Where prehistoric man has not been able to select stones which exactly suited his purpose, he has cut the upper stone until the sole gave the shape he required. The making of the sole has been the predominant factor in the manufacture of these "plain" implements, though it has been followed in some cases by attention to the handle, and as much care has been given to it as a modern mechanic would bestow on obtaining a general symmetrical appearance for his tool. In some cases the implement has at some period been withdrawn from use as an implement, recut, and a hole has been bored in the polished sole. That hole has been made by some tool which could chip out from a smooth surface of flint a perfect oblong or square hole with sharp edges, deep enough to insert a thin stick and hold the stone aloft on it securely. This hole has been made in some of the best specimens of workmanship I have found. Some geologist can probably explain that there was in prehistoric times a creature that could bore a hole in flint with mathematical accuracy without splintering flint it was working on, but it is extremely improbable that he could account for such a creature selecting the most artistically worked flints and stones.

The "plane" is admirably adapted for dressing skins, and it is so used now by many aboriginal tribes.

Anvils.

I have found anvils of all sizes and shapes, from the great mass of flint, with a natural depression in the centre, and with only the knobs chipped off to make it lie flat, to the carefully worked small white pebble, evidently bored to hold the finer pointed tools when they required sharpening by re-chipping. There can

Illustrations
No. 7 and
No. 8.

be no doubt about their use, for the anvils bear the marks of constant work.

I have found a variety of patterns of Strikers.
 strikers.

1st. The simplest form is that of a black flint in varying sizes, from that of a hen's egg to that of an ostrich's. The natural crust is left; the finer end is much dented and chipped. Apparently it was used in the hollow of the hand.

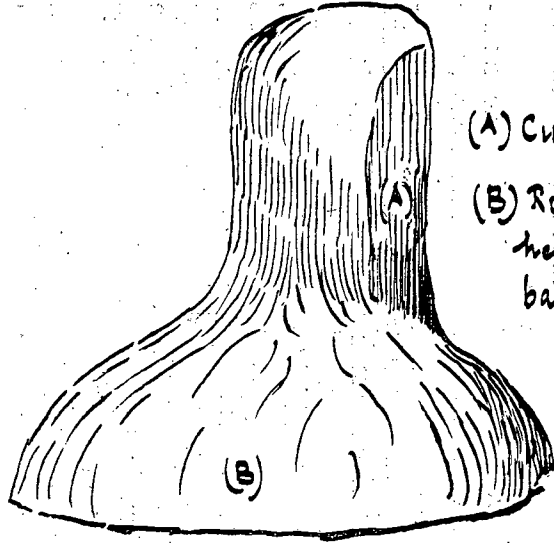
2nd. The same as above, but the striking end chipped to make the stone pear-shaped and pointed.

3rd. The same as above, but the small end of the stone chipped on both sides, so as to give a transverse striking power.

It is very difficult to distinguish the tomahawk from the hatchet. The first found, near the surface, was roughly chipped in white flint on exactly the same pattern and size as the North American tomahawk, which is familiar to us all, and need not be described. The next was a most formidable and unique implement, which could only have been used by a most powerful man, probably for killing animals. It is a great lump of flint about ten inches long by six inches thick, with a hole ground in the centre for a haft two inches in diameter. The striking end, at right angles to the haft, is ground to an edge, and the back or hammer end is roughly rounded off. Close to it were found two or three tomahawks of a different pattern. They are roughly cut flints about ten inches long and four inches broad and high; the sides, base and top are cut squarely, and the striking front is bevelled off by chipping and grinding, and when used with a haft, the cutting edge would be parallel to the haft, like a hatchet. They were probably used for killing cattle.

Tomahawks
and adzes

ILLUSTRATION No. 9.



(A) Cutting for hand grip

(B) Round mushroom
head with flat polished
base. Scale $\frac{1}{2}$.

The daggers are flints which are so made by nature as to give a grasp and protection for the hand and a blade, which by a few chippings at the point, makes them excellent daggers. Many of them have been found in the south of England and on the Continent, chipped fine so as to form an effective blade. Most of those found at Danecroft have been broken sharp off in the blade, and were broken off at about four inches from the naturally made hilt. Their surface is smooth and polished, showing that when they were no longer useful as weapons, they were employed for other purposes. Some of the daggers selected from naturally shaped stones, and untouched by man, are excellent weapons.

Daggers.

These implements appear to have been made from flints throwing out a finger-like protuberance, which has been cut off from the block with a base proportionate to the finger. They resemble petrified toadstools in shape, the stalk used for a handle and the base for a pounder. The small ones are left as nature made them, except for the chipping off from the parent block of flint, but the larger, with a pounding base of three to four inches in diameter, and a hold perpendicular to the base of about the same, have been cut by man to give a firm grasp for the hand, and the circular base has been worn smooth and polished from pounding. They all show many signs of constant use, and are highly polished where they have been grasped by the hand, and also at the base.

Pounders.

Illustration
No. 9.

These have been found in numbers.

1st. A selection of those made by nature, of various shapes and sizes, but all appropriate for use in the present day. This selection has been very carefully made from thin sharp

Pickers.

pointed flints uncut, with natural crust, varying in length from one to six inches.

2nd. Those with a natural hilt, but chipped at the end to a point.

Chisels.

Chisels are represented by only four or five specimens. Much the same in size and shape to a present day chisel if broken off two inches from the edge.

Knives.

Knives are in all sizes, but usually a flake of flint three inches long has been selected; the natural crust left on one side, and the other chipped to an edge.

Borers or Gimlets.

Borers worked to a point with three edges; base giving a grasp for finger and thumb. They were evidently used for boring holes.

Javelin and Spear Tips.

Spear tips have been found in large numbers, and many bear the mark where they were fixed to an arrow or javelin.

Only different types of implements are mentioned here, but there are numbers of other worked stones which are not implements, they must be hereafter described. I dug out many thousands of stones, the vast majority cut and worked by some other means than chipping or striking.

Sir John Evans has written: "The light reflected by the habits and customs of modern savages, enables us to some extent to appreciate the relations and bearings of our native stone antiquities: but the greater part of them have, unfortunately, been discovered as isolated examples, and without attendant circumstances calculated to furnish data for determining their exact age or the manners of those who used them."

I have ventured to write this article because I have some knowledge of "the habits and customs of modern savages," and the stones I discovered were not "isolated examples."