

NEOLITHIC IMPLEMENTS
FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF
SOUTHAMPTON.

BY W. DALE, F.S.A., F.G.S.

Having already described in the pages of our Proceedings, implements of the older stone age and of the bronze period¹ from the neighbourhood of Southampton, it would not be right to pass unnoticed the many interesting finds of implements of Neolithic age which the same locality has afforded. Such finds are not so numerous as those of the older stone age which may arise from the lack of trained observers rather than the scarcity of their existence. Every gravel digger knows a Paleolithic implement when he sees it, whereas the newer stone tools are often passed over. I have been at some pains to teach working men to look in the surface soil for such things and the result has well repaid me for the trouble. It has convinced me that the same river valleys which surround Southampton and were so well peopled in that remote age called Paleolithic were also well populated in the Neolithic age and the age of bronze, when the memorials of the earlier period had, through the lapse of time, been buried deep in the gravel and new conditions of climate and of the surface of the country had set in.

The simplest and most abundant form of neolithic implements is the "flake," which was made by one blow at a block of flint. As the block became angular, flakes could be struck off with a ridge down the centre, and two sharp cutting edges, and shewing a well marked "bulb of percussion" at the butt end. Flakes of this character are

¹ Hants Field Club Papers. Vol. III. pp. 261, 265.

abundant and to a trained eye shew as much evidence of design as do the more perfectly fashioned implements. When a flake has received secondary chipping at the point or sides, or is carefully trimmed to a semi-circular shape, it is known as a "scraper." Numbers of these have been brought to me, especially from Shirley, varying in size from three quarters of an inch to two inches in diameter.

Perhaps the most well-known Neolithic implement is the "celt," which name I may remind the reader has nothing to do with the Celtic race. The word has got into our language from a doubtful Latin word "celtis" used only by Jerome, in the Vulgate translation of the book of Job¹. Celts are either roughly chipped or polished, the former being the more abundant, although not so much sought after. They were hafted and used as we do a small hatchet. One cannot but admire the great pains which must have been spent in rubbing a flint celt to a smooth surface all over so as to obliterate all traces of chipping.

Celts were not the only implements that were sharpened by rubbing. There is a class of tool called, for want of a better name, flint knives, which were manufactured by chipping a piece of flint to comparative thinness and then grinding or polishing the edges till they were sharp. I have obtained two of these, one from Portswood and another from Shirley, besides some smaller tools of a similar character which cannot well be called scrapers and look like smaller knives left from the chipping.

It is well-known that the finer class of Neolithic tools, such as arrow or javelin heads are very scarce in the South of England. I count myself therefore happy to have obtained from Withedswood, Shirley, a leaf-shaped arrow-head which is a *chef-d'œuvre* of Neolithic art. It is not only most elaborately worked, solely by chipping, but is also remarkably thin. I have also a triangular arrow-head of rough workmanship from Shawford Down.

¹ Job 19, 24. "*Vel celte sculptantur in silice.*" The Fr. *cisel.* and Eng. *chisel* are similarly derived.

Although flint is almost invariably the material employed, I have two small polished celts found near Milford, which are exceptions. One is of hard black primary rock and evidently was made from an elongated pebble picked up on the beach, where such pebbles, transported from the West of England, may sometimes be found. The other is a very perfect celt of greenstone and is of the shape and material of the celts found in Brittany and other parts of the continent. It may be regarded as an import of Neolithic times.

From the celts in my possession I have had four figured.

Plate I. Fig. 1. A chipped celt ready for polishing but never so finished.

Fig 2. A polished celt from Shirley shewing much use at the cutting edge.

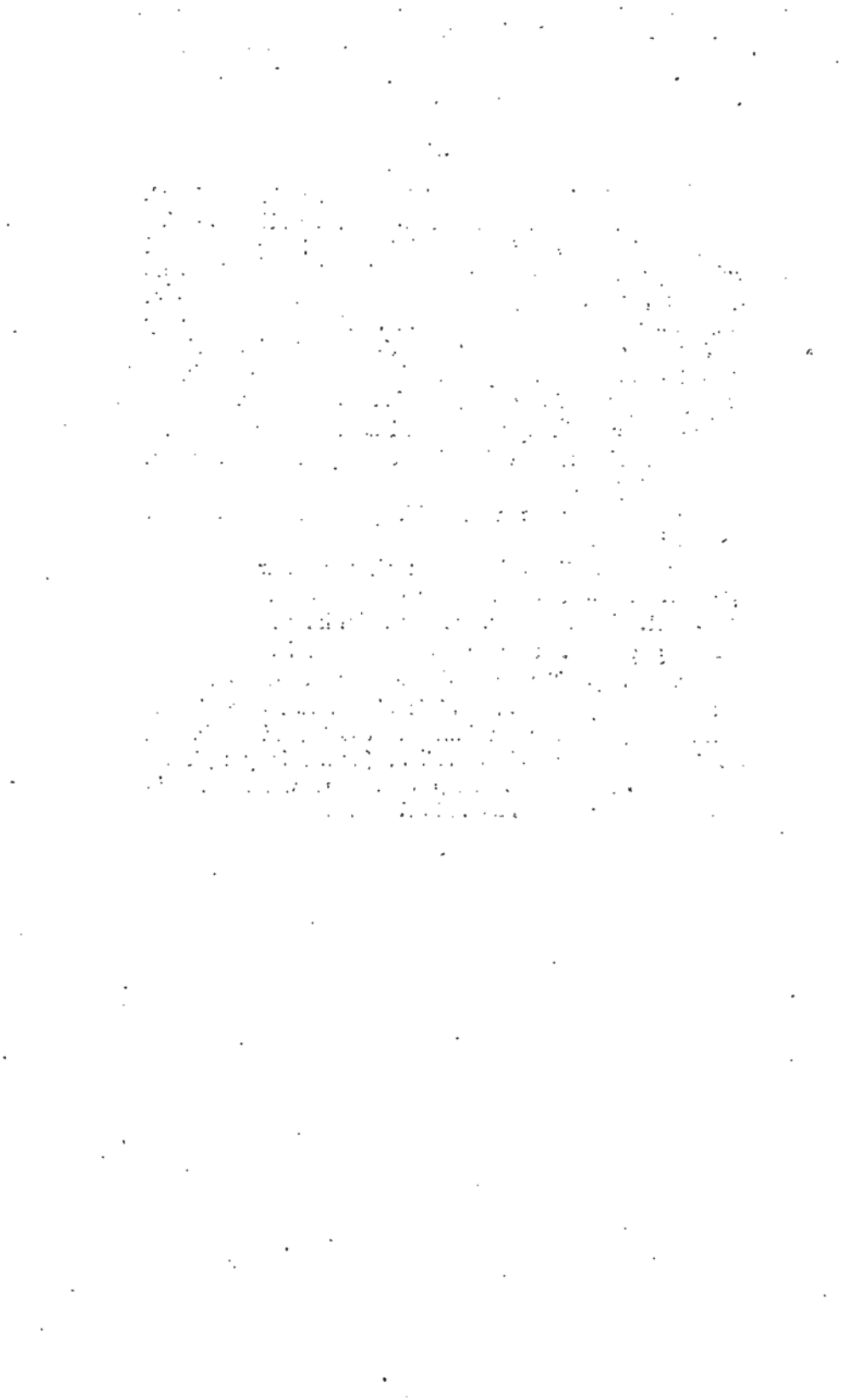
Fig. 3 and 4. Celts from Milford, the latter being the triangular celt of greenstone of continental type.

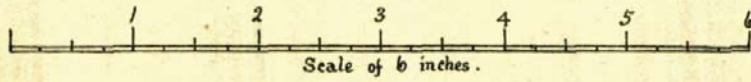
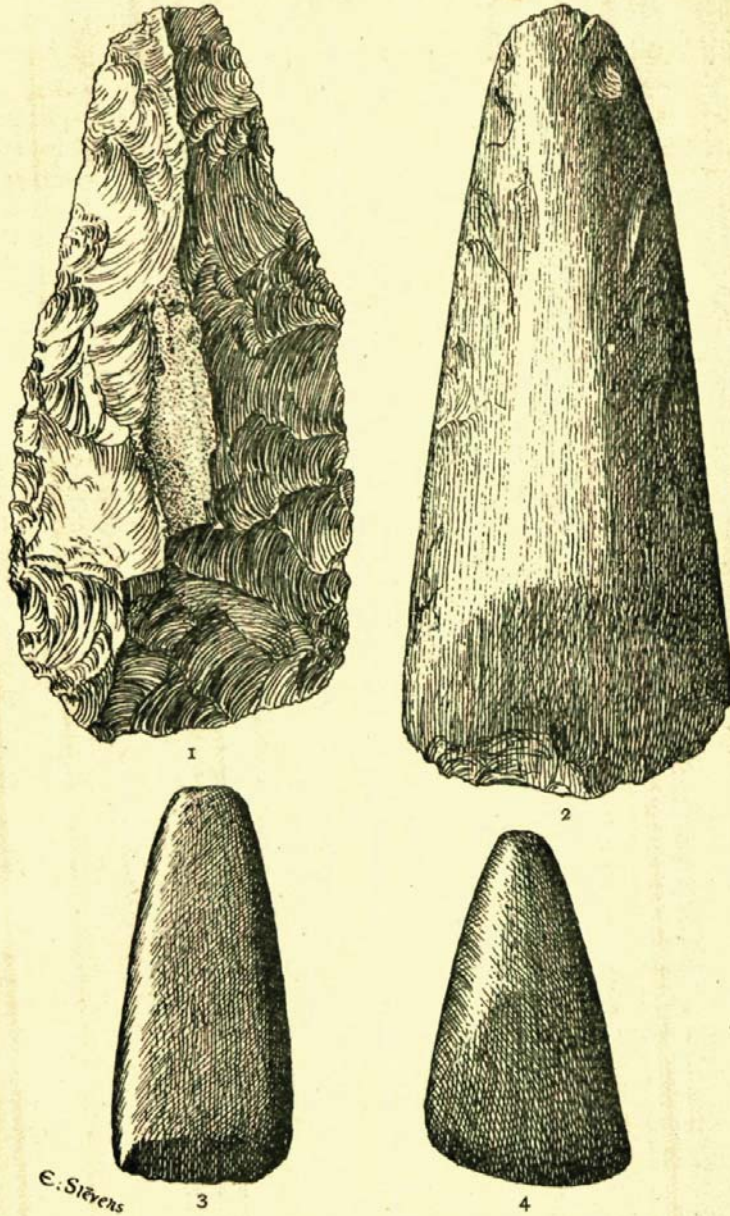
Plate II. Figs. 1 and 2. Ground flint knives.

Figs. 3, 4 and 5. Scrapers and chipped knives.

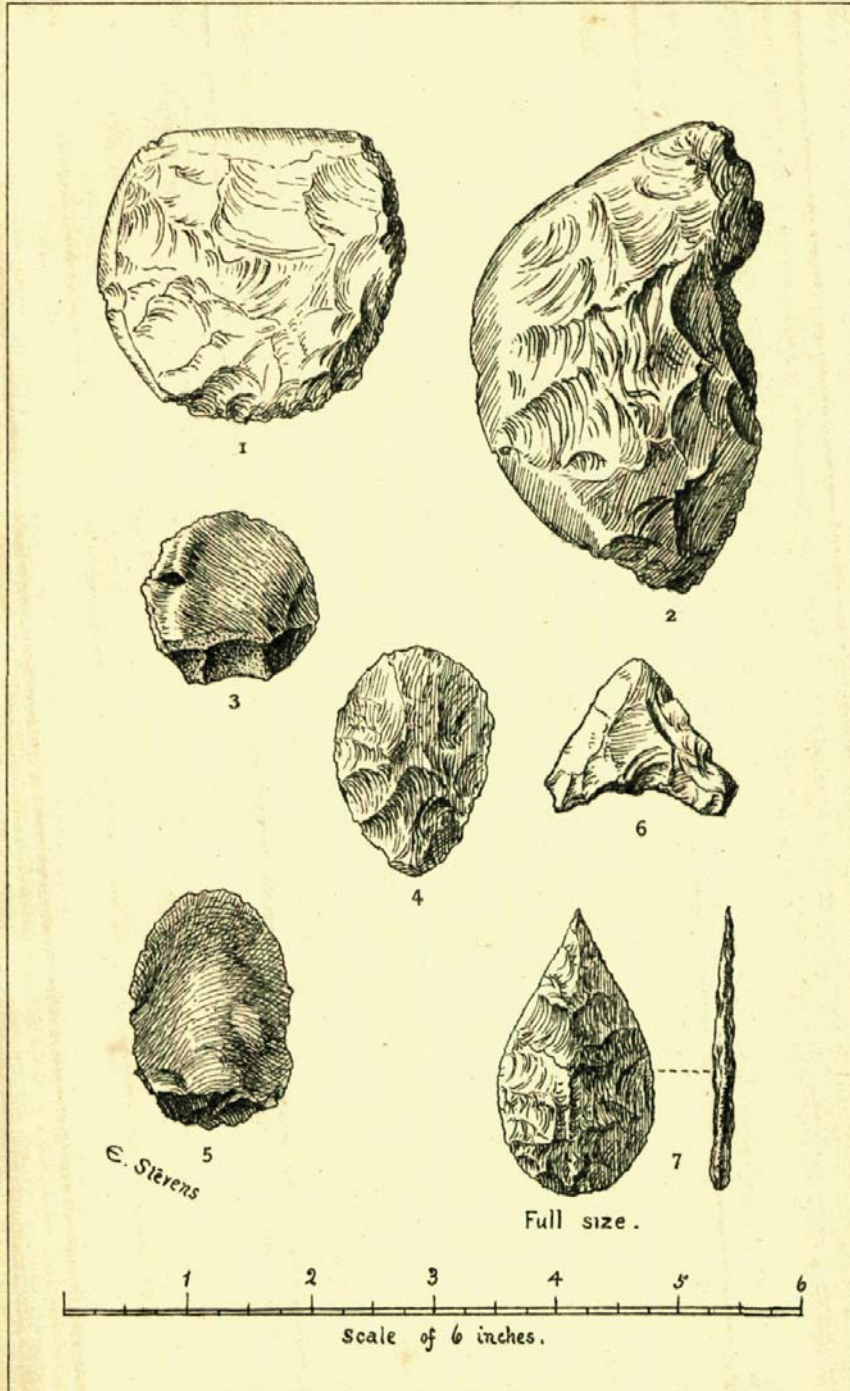
Figs. 6 and 7. Two arrow-heads above referred to.

The leaf-shaped arrow-head is also drawn edgewise as well to shew its extreme thinness and is figured the natural size. The longer ground knife, Fig. 2, (from Shirley) is, it will be observed, half-moon shaped, a type well-known in Denmark, but not often found in England.





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