---

27. The Flint Supplies of the Ancient Cornish.

Author(s): S. Hazzledine Warren

Source: *Man*, Vol. 7 (1907), pp. 39-41

Published by: [Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2787365>

Accessed: 29/12/2014 20:17

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Man*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

of Madras has recently exhibited at the Anthropological Institute photographs of two shrines of village deities in Southern India which appear to be practically identical in form with the dolmen at St. Lythan's. A. L. LEWIS.

England: Archæology.

Warren.

The Flint Supplies of the Ancient Cornish. By S. Hazzledine Warren, F.G.S.

27

In reference to the recent articles in MAN (1906, 97; 1907, 14) under the above heading there is one factor which, it seems to me, has an important bearing upon the problem.

At intervals, all round the coast of Cornwall, there are raised beaches underlying the beds of sub-aërial angular *débris* known as the "head." The material composing the "head" is of purely local origin, but the old beaches contain, in addition to local material, numerous rolled chalk flints. It is from the erosion of these old beaches that the occasional flint pebbles found upon the present beach, and referred to by the Rev. H. G. O. Kendall, are derived.

De la Beche in his *Report on the Geology of Cornwall, Devon, and West Somerset*, published in 1839 (p. 429), suggested that these rolled flints in the raised beaches might possibly have been brought artificially by man. But their wide distribution, their quantity, which, in the aggregate, must be very great, and their entirely unworked state as they are found in the beaches, renders this theory in the highest degree improbable. Beyond this, we now know more of the age of these deposits than was known in 1839. The "head" belongs to the Pleistocene period, and probably, in part at least, represents the glacial deposits further to the north while the raised beaches are earlier than the "head," and may very well be contemporary with the "pre-glacial" beaches of the South of Ireland and elsewhere.

Be this as it may, the raised beaches of Cornwall which yield the chalk flints are clearly Pleistocene, so that if the flint was brought by man it was brought by Palæolithic man and not by Neolithic man. It is not necessary to insist that such a theory would be unreasonable and absurd. In fact, should their pre-glacial age be accepted, they would be very much earlier than even Palæolithic man.

The most probable hypothesis to account for their presence is, to my mind, that suggested by Mr. W. A. E. Ussher in the *Geological Magazine* for 1879, page 109. He suggests that during a period of much greater elevation of the land the flints were borne westwards along the river valleys under what is now the English Channel, and that, as depression set in again, they were drifted upwards by the waves to form the new beaches. An alternative suggestion is that the drift of the beach shingle along the south coast may formerly have been from east to west, and not, as is now the case, from west to east.

In support of the former theory one may mention a patch of gravel upon the eastern promontory of St. Martin's, one of the Scilly Islands, which is chiefly composed of chalk flints and Greensand chert.* This is considered to be a remnant of a gravel deposited by a river flowing westward when the English Channel was dry land. In fact, flint is capable of withstanding so much wear and tear, and is, moreover, practically insoluble, that it is no uncommon thing to find it as an "erratic" in drift deposits far from any *original* source of supply. Thus, to mention two other instances, we find chalk flints in considerable quantities in certain parts of the glacial drift of South Wales,† as also in that of the Isle of Man.

* G. Barrow, *The Geology of the Isles of Scilly* (*Memoirs of the Geological Survey of the United Kingdom*), 1906, p. 15.

† J. W. E. David, *Quart. Journ. Geol. Soc.*, Vol. XXXIX., 1883, p. 44.

Whatever geological theory to account for its presence we may accept, it is at least the fact that Cornwall does furnish a natural source of flint supply almost all round its borders. It would, of course, need industry to collect this flint along the coast, but the conditions are somewhat similar to those found in the Isle of Man. There, also, flint does not naturally occur except in the form of erratics in the glacial drift, but though comparatively scarce, as it is in Cornwall, it was yet collected by prehistoric man and very extensively used for the fabrication of his implements. The working sites in the Isle of Man are usually situated near to where the raw material is to be found.*

As to the amount of flint contained in the Cornish beaches, I cannot say that I have given this point much attention myself, but Sir Joseph Prestwich,† in his memoir on *The Raised Beaches, and Head, of the South of England*, quotes Mr. A. Whitley to the effect that the proportion of chalk flint to other rocks is as 2 : 41 (or nearly 5 per cent.) in the raised beach near St. Ives. Thus the amount of raw material available was by no means inconsiderable; while it must further be remembered that these old beaches are undergoing erosion at the present time, and so must have been more extensive in the days of prehistoric man than they are to-day. This effect would also be enhanced by the depression of the land which has taken place since Neolithic times.

The next question to be considered is this: Is the flint that was used by prehistoric man in Cornwall of such a character that it might have been obtained from the old beaches? In many cases, at least, I think that this can be unhesitatingly answered in the affirmative.

The Rev. H. G. O. Kendall in his paper in MAN (1906, 97) speaks of the number of small flint pebbles, smooth and water-worn, found upon the site of the coast settlements, evidently brought there ready for use. There can be no doubt that these were collected from the local beaches, where such pebbles may be found. But that this is universally so I should be very sorry to assert, each case must be judged upon its own merits. I do not know the Dozmaré flints referred to by Mr. A. L. Lewis; it is chiefly on the north coast of Cornwall that I have collected.

At one place, in particular, near Newquay, I found a considerable number of worked flints a few years ago. The site on which they were found was rather an interesting one; it was nothing but a barren, narrow ledge of rocks jutting out into the sea, and yet I have seldom seen a greater number of worked flints upon so small a space. I could not conceive of any purpose for which prehistoric man should occupy it, except that of fishing from the rocks into the sea. Among the flints found here there were a few well-formed flakes of small size, but the greater part of the material consisted of the *débris* of fabrication—cores and chips, a large number of the latter being of minute size. It was evidently the actual working site to which the raw material had been brought for fabrication. The cores and many of the larger flakes, which had some of the outer crust of the flint upon them, showed that the raw material had consisted simply of the rolled flint pebbles of the raised beach. A certain proportion of the implements, however, were made not of flint, but of Greensand chert, and this material, I have no doubt, came equally from the old beaches.

The same also appeared to be the case elsewhere on the coast. This flint that seems to me to be of obviously local origin is usually white to grey in colour and much rolled by the sea. Further inland—and further from the local source of supply—we get, as mentioned by Mr. Kendall, a larger proportion of black flint which still retains its original outer crust. It is very probable that this may be imported, though perhaps at least partially in the worked state.

* P. M. C. Kermode and W. A. Herdman, *Illustrated Notes on Manx Antiquities*. Liverpool, 1904, p. 26

† *Quart. Journ. Geol. Soc.*, Vol. XLVIII., 1892, p. 281.

What we want is a collection of all the varieties of flint found in the raised beaches—then we shall know whether the black flint with apparently unrolled crust is, or is not, imported. I have never had any intention of writing upon this subject, or I should have endeavoured to have obtained that information before doing so, for that, it seems to me, is where the solution of the problem must be sought. We must, however, even here, in the light of the flint and chert gravel of the island of St. Martin's described by Mr. G. Barrow, bear in mind the possibility of there having been formerly other deposits of flinty gravel in Cornwall—possibly composed of less waterworn material—than those that are accessible to us to-day.*

S. HAZZLEDINE WARREN.

Australia.**Hartland.****Ngeumba and Euahlayi.** *By E. Sidney Hartland, F.S.A.***28**

Mr. Andrew Lang calls my attention to the resemblance, which had escaped me when I wrote the notice of Mr. Mathews's *Ethnological Notes* (MAN, 1906, 99), between the "active blood" and the "sluggish blood" of the Ngeumba, and the light-blooded and dark-blooded divisions of the Euahlayi, as described by Mrs. Parker. On referring to *The Euahlayi Tribe*, p. 11, I see that the native names for these divisions are the same in the two tribes, only slightly disguised by a difference of spelling. Mrs. Parker, however, calls these divisions phratries, and represents them as being the primary exogamous divisions; while Mr. Mathews applies that description to two other divisions of the Ngeumba called by him, Ngurrawun and Mumbun. Further investigation is needed on the matrimonial divisions of both the Ngeumba and Euahlayi, who appear to be in fact two tribes of one and the same "nation."

E. SIDNEY HARTLAND.

India, South.**Keane.****The Cochin Tribes and Castes.** *By A. H. Keane, LL.D.***29**

All students of primitive man will be glad to know that the last Census Report (1901) for the State of Cochin is now being supplemented by an exhaustive ethnological survey of the whole field by Mr. L. A. Krishna Iyer. This enthusiastic anthropologist, who is a local correspondent of the Institute, has already issued as many as ten special monographs which bear an official character and have been printed at the Government Press, Ernakulam (1904-06). In its general character the series corresponds somewhat to the well-known and highly-prized ethnographic *Bulletins*, published by the Madras Government Press under the superintendence of Mr. Edgar Thurston, except that the somatic features are not quite so fully treated. This drawback, however, will eventually be rectified as soon as Mr. Iyer has procured the appliances required for taking cranial and other anatomical measurements.

Meanwhile the work already carried out is in all other respects of a high order and the memoirs dealing, for instance, with the social status and religious notions of the Parayas, Malayars, Eravallars, and Izhuvas may be described as models of their kind. When completed, the series, taken jointly with the Madras bulletins and Mr. Rivers' notable volume on the Todas of the Nilgiri plateau, will present a very thorough picture of the large southern section of the uncultured Dravidian aborigines.

Of special value is the memoir devoted to the Izhuvas who under divers names (Illavars, Tiyyas, Shanars, Billavas, Chovas, &c.) are widespread in Cochin, Malabar, and Travancore. Although their hereditary occupations as a caste are the cultivation of the coconut tree, toddy drawing, and arrak distilling, they have military traditions on the strength of which some even claim kinship with the warrior Kshatriya caste. But the interest centres chiefly in their religious beliefs and magic arts. The theory has lately been advanced that religion and magic belong to two different orders of thought;

* Some almost unabraded flint nodules from the Scilly Islands may be seen in a case, recently arranged to illustrate the geology of that district, in the Museum of Practical Geology, Jermyn Street, London. See also R. Reid, *Quart. Journ. Geol. Soc.*, Vol. LX., 1904, p. 113.