Flint Implements from the Valley of the Bann.

Author(s): W. J. Knowles

Source: *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 10 (1881), pp. 150-153

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

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2841606>

Accessed: 16/06/2014 02:56

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 *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

From the SOCIETY.—Bulletin de la Société Impériale des Naturalistes de Moscou, 1879, No. 3.

From the INSTITUTION.—Journal of the Royal United Service Institution, No. 104.

From the ASSOCIATION.—Proceedings of the Geologists' Association. Vol. VI, Nos. 5, 6.

From the EDITOR.—"Nature," Nos. 548, 549.

— Revue Scientifique, Nos. 44, 45.

The Director read a paper entitled "Notes on the Western Regions." Translated from the "Tsëen Han Shoo," Book xevi, Part 1. By A. Wylie, Esq.*

The following paper was read :—

FLINT IMPLEMENTS *from the VALLEY of the BANN.*

By W. J. KNOWLES.

I HAVE obtained at different times within the last three or four years, from the banks of the River Bann, a series of flint weapons or tools, which differ considerably in type from the ordinary flint implements of the North of Ireland. They have been chiefly found on the left bank near the town of Portglenone, in a deposit of diatomaceous clay which underlies the peat and is about five feet in thickness. The banks of the river are five feet higher than the winter level of the water, and consist of a small covering of soil, then the diatomaceous earth, and below that a clayey peat. At a short distance from the river the clay passes under a covering of peat of the ordinary kind. The clay is suitable for brickmaking, and every year during the summer months a considerable quantity of it is dug up for that purpose, and it is while this operation is going on that the implements are found.

The first flint tools of the kind I am referring to which came into my possession were purchased from a person who goes through the country districts and buys from labourers and farmers such objects of antiquity as they may find when turning over the soil, but during the last two years I have gone at various times in the brickmaking season and purchased the objects direct from the labourers.

The implements are of two types. The kind which is most numerous appears to have been made by splitting up nodules into halves and quarters, which are afterwards formed into pointed implements by a process of coarse chipping, but as a general rule they do not seem to be made from anything resem-

* See page 20 in the present volume.

bling a flake. The implements of this kind number about fifty, show no trace of polishing, and all agree in having a cutting point and thick base for holding in the hand. They are as a general rule long, narrow, and rather of a cylindrical form than flat and broad. Some of the largest are 7 or 8 inches long, and from 2 to 3 inches broad at the base, but a few are broad and flat. There is one very fine implement in the series which is flat, and only worked on one side, but otherwise it has a likeness to the flat triangular palæolithic implements. It is 6 inches long, nearly 4 broad at the base, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick, while the stout base still shows the weathered surface of the nodule from which it was made. I have examined several private collections and have not found any implements that agree in character with those I have described, and very few, perhaps not more than three or four, that would have a slight likeness to them. I have also inquired of the man from whom I first bought objects of this kind, as to whether he may have found implements of this type in any other district, but he assures me he has not, and that the kind referred to were all got in the Valley of the Bann, when the brick was being made. I regularly buy flint implements from another dealer who confines his walks in search of antiquities to the eastern half of county Antrim, away from the direction of the Bann altogether, and on showing him this series of implements he declared they were perfectly new to him, and said he had never got similar implements though he had been collecting for many years. This was confirmed by my own labours as far as my experience went in collecting, from which I conclude that implements of this kind had a special connection with rivers.

Dr. Evans in "Stone Implements and Ornaments of Great Britain," mentions that he has found implements of "tongue shaped" form in Ireland which were obtained from the shores of Lough Neagh, at Toome, and which I believe to be similar in character to some of those described by me. I have also myself picked up at Toome an implement of the same type as those from the diatomaceous deposit, and I was present at an excursion to that place of the Ballymena Naturalists' Field Club about three years ago, when one or two specimens of the same type were procured by the members on the shores of Lough Neagh, where the Bann emerges from it. But Toome is only three or four miles farther up the Bann than the place I have mentioned, and as the diatomaceous deposit is found there also, I am of opinion that those implements found by Dr. Evans, myself, and others, on the shores of Lough Neagh, were derived from the diatomaceous clay by the process of denudation.

The second series of objects may be described as large flakes

of triangular outline, with sharp point and central rib down the back, but having the base wrought into a tang. In the catalogue of the Royal Irish Academy this form of flake is represented by Fig. 3; the tang, as far as I am able to interpret what is said about it, being looked on as the first step in the process of development into arrow and spear heads, but as I can also refer nearly the whole of the tanged flakes in my possession to the diatomaceous deposit on the banks of the Bann, I am rather inclined to believe that instead of being a step in the way towards greater perfection, and as pointing out the process of development, they were perfect implements of their kind, and like those of the first series, manufactured specially for use about rivers.

I have also got from the same deposit a very few—three or four—polished stone celts, and though there is something peculiar about them, as, for instance, the edge being more pointed than usual, and not of the ordinary semi-circular form, yet I am uncertain whether all may be of the same age or not. Previous to making the brick, the clay is dug out and cast into a heap, which is afterwards minced up with spades into small pieces, and it is frequently during the mincing operation that the implements are found. It is therefore not certain whether the polished and unpolished implements may have been found together in close association, or the one at the top and the other at the bottom. Any of the forms of implement may, if dropped into the water, have sunk more or less into the deposit below, but I have been assured by the workmen that some of the large unpolished implements were taken out quite close to the bottom from under 5 feet of clay.

I cannot say what the age of these objects may be as I have not been able to obtain any animal remains. If we are to accept as an acknowledged doctrine that the remains of the Irish Elk are only to be found in the marly deposit below the peat, then we may draw some sort of conclusion from the fact that these implements have been found in a bed occupying a similar position; but whatever their age may be they are none the less interesting, for if of neolithic age the fact of their being found chiefly in a river valley, and not generally where other flint implements are found in abundance, would lead us to the conclusion I have already mentioned, that they were manufactured chiefly for use about rivers; and this fact may suggest a reason for the large triangular flints of palæolithic age being chiefly confined to the old river gravels, while the implements from the caves are so different in type. These implements of the pointed kind might therefore in both cases be not for general use, but chiefly for the river valleys. They may

possibly have formed weapons for attacking the larger animals when they came down to drink, but the theory that they were used for breaking holes in ice, I think is also a very likely one. If so it would follow that the climate of the north of Ireland when these implements were used was much colder than it is at present. I believe the tanged flakes were used mounted possibly for spearing fish, as suggested by Dr. Evans, when referring to similar implements from Lough Neagh in "*Archæologia*," vol. xli, p. 401. But whatever the use of either kind may have been there is no doubt that they are common implements in the deposit of diatomaceous clay on the banks of the Bann, and uncommon, if found at all, in other parts of the north of Ireland where flint implements are common.

The following communications were also read :—

W. D. GOOCH, Esq., entitled "Notes on the occurrence of Stone Implements in South Russia;" "Jade Implements in Switzerland," by HODDER M. WESTROPP, Esq.; "Notes on the Discovery of Prehistoric Remains in Central Russia," by C. H. E. CARMICHAEL, Esq., M.R.S.L. Extracts from these will appear in a future number of the Journal.

On the CRANIAL CHARACTERS of the NATIVES of the FIJI ISLANDS.

By WILLIAM HENRY FLOWER, LL.D., F.R.S., P.Z.S.,
V.P. Anthropol. Inst., etc.*

THE Viti, or as it is now more commonly called, Fiji Archipelago, consists of two large, and a considerable number (estimated at 250) of small islands, of which about 80 are inhabited. The latter lie mostly to the east of the main islands, and nearer to the Tongan and Samoan groups. The geographical situation of the Archipelago gives it its peculiar ethnological interest, as it is placed close to the line which forms the boundary between the portions of the ocean inhabited mainly by one or other of the two great and very distinct races of the Pacific, the Melanesian and the Polynesian, using the former term for all the dark-skinned, frizzly-haired, dolichocephalic people of the Western Pacific, and the latter for the light-brown, straight-haired, brachycephalic or sub-brachycephalic race, called Malayo-Polynesian by the older writers, and for which Messrs. Keane and Whitmee have lately proposed the name of Sawaiori.

In accordance with this geographical position, as well as from observations based upon their physical characters and social condition, the Fijians have generally been considered to be a mixed or mongrel people, containing elements derived from both

* Read June 22nd, 1880.