

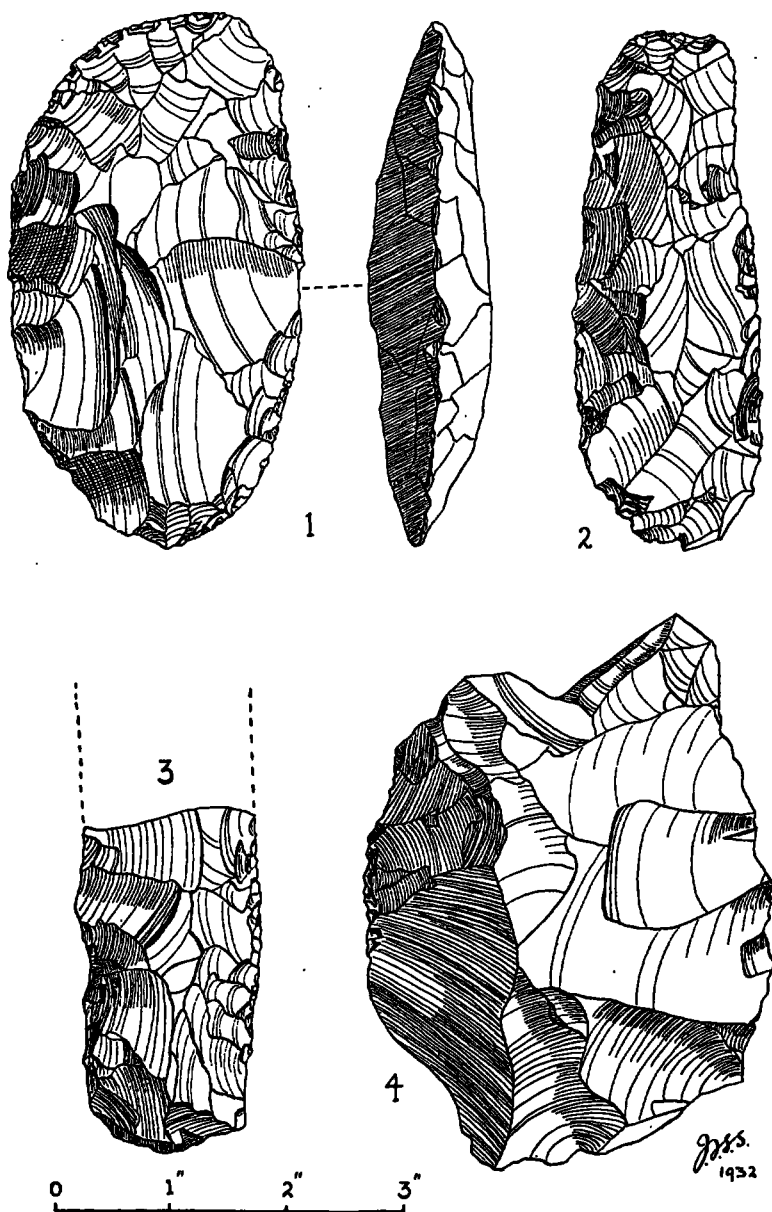
A FLINT MINE AT MARTIN'S CLUMP, OVER WALLOP

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UNTIL recently flint mines in Wessex, comparable with Grimes Graves in Norfolk and those of the Sussex Downs, were unknown in spite of the abundance of surface flint industries. This lacuna in an otherwise exceedingly rich area was to some extent filled by the discovery and excavation of two of a large cluster of mine shafts with accompanying workshop floors on Easton Down, Winterslow in S. Wiltshire (*Wilts. Arch. Magazine*, XLV (1931), 350). The discovery at once raises the question whether this proved cluster was capable of supplying the needs of Neolithic and Early Bronze Age man over a large area and through a number of centuries. The five suspected and four excavated Sussex mine clusters (Cissbury, Blackpatch, Harrow Hill and Stoke Down), which are spread out along the South Downs, supply a partial answer: the similarity in mining methods and industry shown by these indicates approximate contemporaneity and, therefore, it is evident that the flint was mined locally and was not necessarily transported over long distances.

Unfortunately Wessex, especially Wiltshire, was extensively cultivated in Early Iron Age and Romano-British times; and pit-shafts can be readily obliterated by the plough, a fact very noticeable over an area of Easton Down. But rabbits are sometimes good indicators of underground workings, and on land which has for some time reverted to grass their activities are worth close observation. It was thus that the writer has discovered another large flint mine cluster just inside the Hampshire border. Fortunately a large area has never been cultivated and the pit-shafts are clearly visible numbering well over 100. These are well defined by the surrounding banks of chalk rubble which have never completely silted back.

This new cluster, partially on War Office land, lies about two miles north-east of Easton Down, on the summit of the small hill known as Martin's Clump in the parish of Over Wallop (6in. O.S. Map, Hants XXX N.E.; Lat. $51^{\circ} 8' 49''$, Long. $1^{\circ} 38' 31''$ W.). The position of the site has been marked on the new Ordnance Survey *Map of Neolithic Wessex* (1932, p. 22, No. 56a). Those pit-shafts which are visible lie not only on the south side of the clump of trees but also on the north-east side a few yards from the tumulus. The activities of the rabbits on the surrounding ground, which has been cultivated, shows that the mined area covers some acres. The ground itself is strewn



with large flint flakes and spalls, and three workshop floors, quite undisturbed, have been identified.

Since an exhaustive study of this new mine cluster must await the completion of the Easton Down group, it has been thought advisable to place on record such facts as have been gleaned from a somewhat cursory examination.

The industry as a whole appears to be identical with that of Easton Down. Such information as has been gathered from the latter site will therefore probably be applicable to Martin's Clump. Now the Easton Down mine shafts are surrounded by pit dwellings, almost entirely of Beaker date. Recent excavations have proved that the site was occupied in Windmill Hill and Peterborough times, or at any rate by users of these two distinctive types of pottery, and reached its zenith in the hands of the Beaker Folk. It is hardly surprising to find therefore that the only sherds which have been picked up on the surface of Martin's Clump are of Beaker date.

One of the surface workshop floors mentioned above has been opened with the help of Mr. J. G. D. Clark. This measures 12 by 14ft. and consists of a mass of flakes and broken and half-worked implements. The floor itself is about 6in. thick and lies directly under the turf in an undisturbed state. The industry proves to be a core industry, identical with the celt factory on Easton Down. No flakes possessing secondary working have been found. As is usual on such floors, small pockets of tiny flakes were encountered. These without doubt resulted from the final finishing of the implements. A few pieces of burnt flint were scattered throughout the floor but no hearth was identified. As in all workshop floors and mine shafts of the flint mining period the degree of patination of the tools and flakes is inversely proportional to the depth at which they occur. Four tools chosen for illustration are figured in Plate I.

IMPLEMENTS. PLATE I.

- Fig. 1. This is one of the best specimens of Palaeolithic form which has been found at either flint mine cluster. As has been abundantly proved, these forms, which bear so decided a resemblance to those of the Drift, occur in all flint mining areas and show that the type survived, obviously for some special use. They cannot be used for dating purposes since they are not the most highly developed types. This specimen is neatly and carefully chipped over both faces and bears a cutting or scraping edge all round, though this has been somewhat blunted by use. Length $4\frac{1}{2}$ in., width $2\frac{1}{2}$ in., thickness 1 in.

- Fig. 2. Either the butt end of a thin-butted celt or more probably a form of chisel as the broader end is obviously not the result of an unintentional fracture. The type has been frequently found at Easton Down. It is well flaked over both faces and the narrow cutting end has been blunted by battering. Length $4\frac{1}{2}$ in., width $1\frac{5}{8}$ in., thickness $\frac{3}{4}$ in.
- Fig. 3. The butt end of a celt broken during manufacture. It possesses a very pointed oval section.
- Fig. 4. An implement difficult to classify but of typical flint mine form. The absence of a flake industry precludes it being a core. It is probably a roughout for some small tool or a rough scraper, possibly part of a miner's tool bag. Length 5 in., width $3\frac{1}{2}$ in., thickness $1\frac{3}{8}$ in.

The occurrence and situation of this second mine cluster renders more probable the finding of others in Wessex. It indicates that the raw material as well as the finished implements need not necessarily have been transported long distances. Large patches of implements and flakes occur on Salisbury Plain and on the chalk areas of the surrounding counties, but these are usually confined to definite areas. Is it not possible that all traces of former pit-shafts have since been obliterated by the plough and that some, though of course not all, of these surface industries represent the scattered remains of workshop floors?

An interesting flint factory site at Little Somborne, near Stockbridge, has been studied and described by Dr. R. C. C. Clay (P.P.S.E.A., V. 67). The flint was here apparently obtained from an outcrop. The industry as gauged by the implements found is not, however, strictly parallel to that of the typical flint mines. The absence of any true celts coupled with an abundant flake industry points rather to its being slightly earlier in date. The most developed type appears to be the Thames or Spiennes pick. It is probable, therefore, that we have here an early phase of flint mining, and excavation of the site should prove of interest.



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Plate I. JUGS FROM A ROMANO-BRITISH REFUSE PIT AT SWANWICK, HANTS.

1. Hard dirty-cream clay. Pinched spout and two-ribbed handle.
2. Hard white clay.
3. Hard grey clay with black outside surface, decorated on the body with scored lattice pattern. Pinched spout and three-ribbed handle.