

# SOME NEOLITHIC AND BRONZE AGE FINDS FROM MERSEYSIDE AND THE NORTH WEST

R W Cowell

## Introduction

Chance prehistoric finds are frequently referred to Liverpool Museum for identification before either being returned to their owners or donated to the Museum's collections. A number of these finds have already been published but a significant group of material has built up that remains unknown to a wider audience. This article is therefore intended to up-date the publication of all the most important categories of local material to the end of 1992, which together with Cowell (in prep a.) will provide the complete corpus of significant, single, later prehistoric chance finds from the county. Three entries, Nos 10, 17 and 18, in this corpus relate to artefacts that have already been published. As this was only in the form of photographic plates, the illustrations are produced here to complement the information already available.

The criteria for inclusion in this paper are: that the finds are of local relevance to the North West region, defined as the area from Cumbria in the north to

Cheshire in the south, bordered by the Pennines to the east; that dating and function of the pieces can be fairly well attributed; that they have resulted from chance discovery. The artefacts in this paper cover the Neolithic and Bronze age periods and are mainly confined to stone axes, flint arrowheads and metalwork.

A number of locations have produced moderate sized groups of archaeological material through casual collection by members of the public. These are mainly Mesolithic in date (c.8000-3500 BC), but are excluded here as they will be treated as part of other Mesolithic publication projects currently underway. These are based on the large collections of material held in the Museum resulting from the regional field programmes of the Field Archaeology Section. They include c.15000 pieces of Mesolithic flintwork from excavations, and several thousand Mesolithic and later prehistoric flint artefacts from field walking. This material will be documented in due course in the relevant publications deriving from the fieldwork (Cowell, in prep b, c; Cowell and Innes 1994).

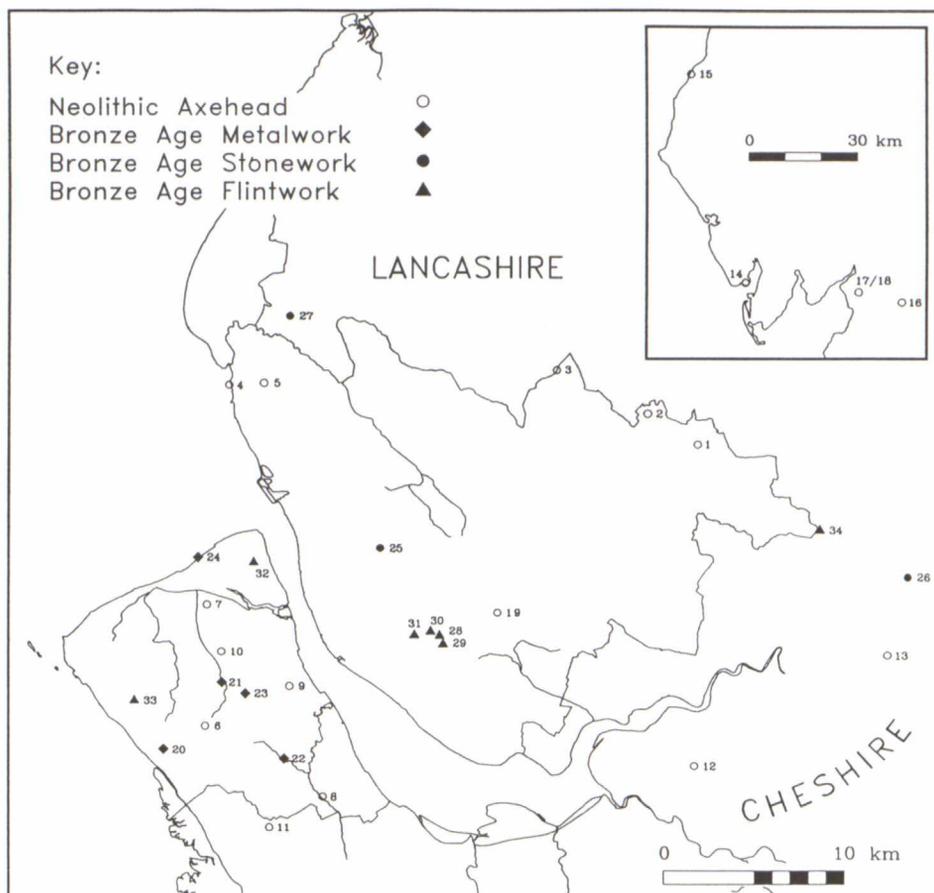


Figure 1: Location map showing later prehistoric findspots mentioned in the text from Merseyside and the North West.

## NEOLITHIC

### Archaeological Background

The Neolithic period (c.3400-2000 BC) marks the beginning of farming in these islands after c.5000 years when communities had lived solely by hunting woodland animals and gathering wild plants (the Mesolithic). The main artefacts associated with the earliest farmers in this area are the stone axehead and the leaf shaped flint arrowhead. The types included in this paper are, with one exception, axeheads. The rounded end of the axeheads would have been set in a wooden or perhaps bone haft, with the wider end forming the cutting edge. Most have been smoothed or 'polished' by rubbing or grinding on another stone. A number have flattened sides which is a typical feature of examples produced and found in the Lake District.

Most of these pieces are likely to date from slightly later than the time of the introduction of farming, perhaps from c.2750 to c.2000 BC, after agriculture was well established. From about this date the production of axes in upland areas such as the Lake District and North Wales was highly organised and products from these 'factories' travelled hundreds of miles into areas that do not contain such rocks. Thin-sectioning of the artefact can usually identify the source area of the stone from which it is made, although this has been possible in only a few of the following examples. In the absence of such scientific sampling Liverpool Museum geologists have undertaken macro inspection of the rock from which the axes are made to suggest the most likely areas of origin. This cannot be regarded as conclusive as thin-sectioning. An interesting feature of these identifications is that many of these axes appear to be made from siltstone, which is a sedimentary rock that can be found quite locally in the Coal Measures between the Pennines and North Wales. This contrasts with the more usual pattern, whereby the bulk of total axe finds in the country derive from non local volcanic rocks that were exploited in the major production centres.

A number of explanations have been put forward for the distribution of axes seen across the region, mostly concerned with trade routes (Barnes 1982, 45; Cummins 1980). Bradley and Edmonds (1993) outline a more persuasive case for the distribution of axes through a complicated network of social contacts and obligations. The local axes can therefore be seen as a vital element for interpreting the distribution of Neolithic settlement, whereby the axes were used locally for various woodworking tasks. They may also have had a wider use, particularly as gifts and for other types of exchange, which is likely to have been a central feature of social relations between the small groups of farmers who lived in the area. The distribution of the axes is therefore held to be the most important evidence for the distribution of the earliest farmers in the area as there is an absence of other indicators of settlement such as pottery, flint scatters and burial and ceremonial sites.

The strongest concentration of axes in Merseyside is on the north Wirral. These are concentrated around the former course of the rivers Birket and Fender and particularly on the lower slopes of the sandstone ridges of Birkenhead and to a lesser extent Wallasey. There is a slight extension southwards onto the boulder clay areas of central Wirral around Barnston, possibly again connected with the valley of the former Fender river. To the north and east of the Mersey the pattern is less concentrated, though again there appear to be links with the two major river valleys in the area. There is a thin scatter along the Alt-Ditton valley, particularly around the estuary of the Alt. The other main locational factor appears to be the Sankey valley further to the east in St Helens, where the distribution is particularly strong at the southern end around its confluence with the Mersey. This distribution is continued to some extent along the upper slopes of the river Weaver in north Cheshire, near its confluence with the Mersey (Cowell 1991).

### Neolithic stone axes

#### *St Helens District*

**No. 1. Fig. 2.** Ashton-in-Makerfield  
SJ 551991 SMR 5599.04  
Private ownership

A polished stone axehead, with faceted long edges and a partially damaged butt was found on the surface of a ploughed field by metal detector in 1983. A macroscopic inspection of the stone places it in the Borrowdale volcanic tuff series of the Lake District.

Dimensions: Length (L.) 128mm; Breadth (B.) 66mm; Thickness (Th.) 31mm; Weight (Wt) (Not recorded)

**No. 2. Fig. 1.** Billinge  
SJ 524008 SMR 5200.03  
Private ownership

A ground stone axehead with pointed butt was handed into St Helens Museum in 1987 for identification, and was seen and recorded there. The findspot is located on the mid slopes of the Carboniferous ridge between Billinge and Upholland, which marks the eastern limit of the Lancashire plain. There was not time to obtain a macroscopic inspection of the stone from which it is made, but no other artefacts have been recorded from the county in the same material.

Dimensions: L. 120mm; B. 54mm; Th. 30mm; Wt (Not recorded)

**No. 3. Fig. 2** Rainford  
SD 475032 SMR 4703.01  
Private ownership

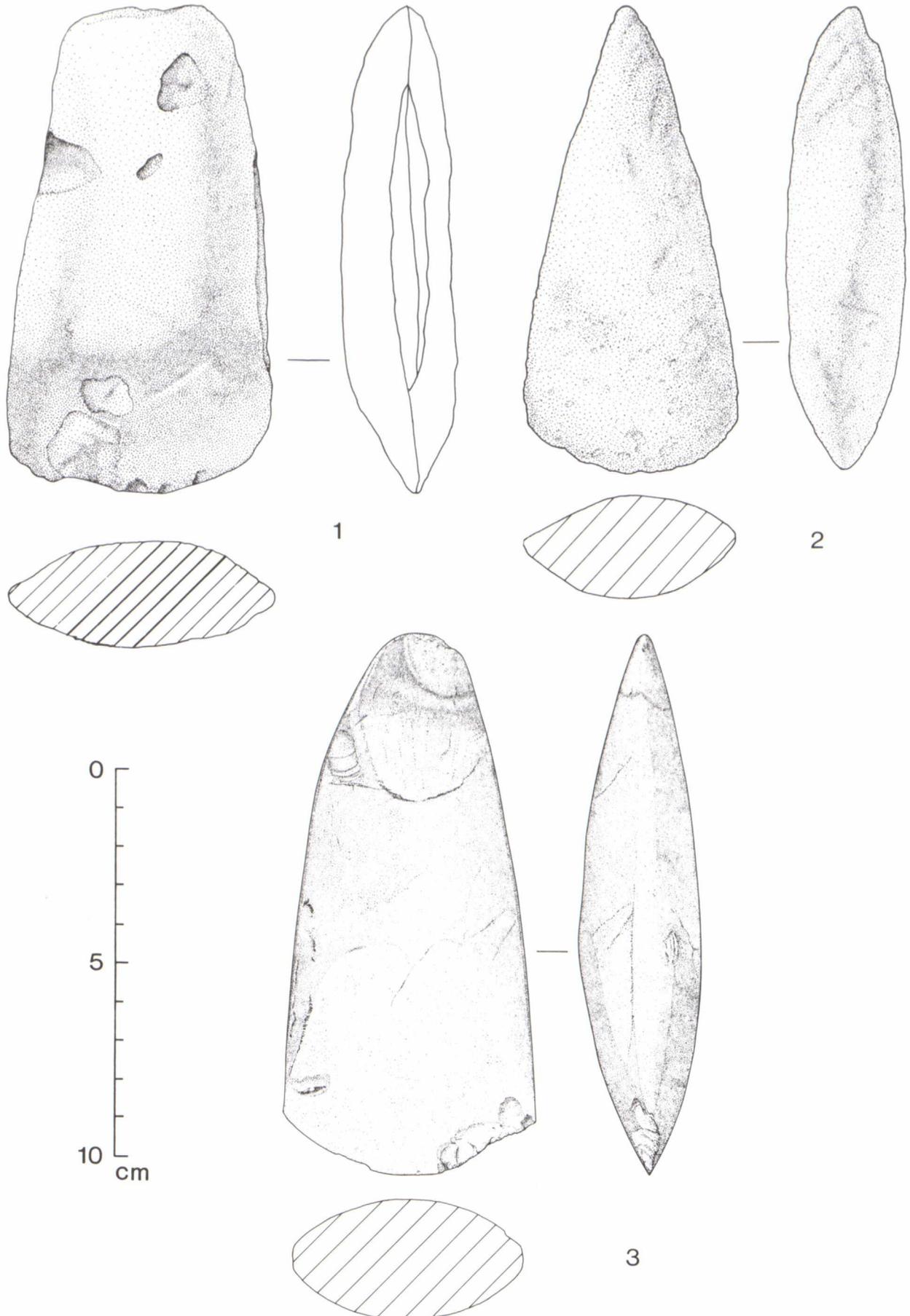


Figure 2: Neolithic stone axes from St Helens District, Nos 1-3.

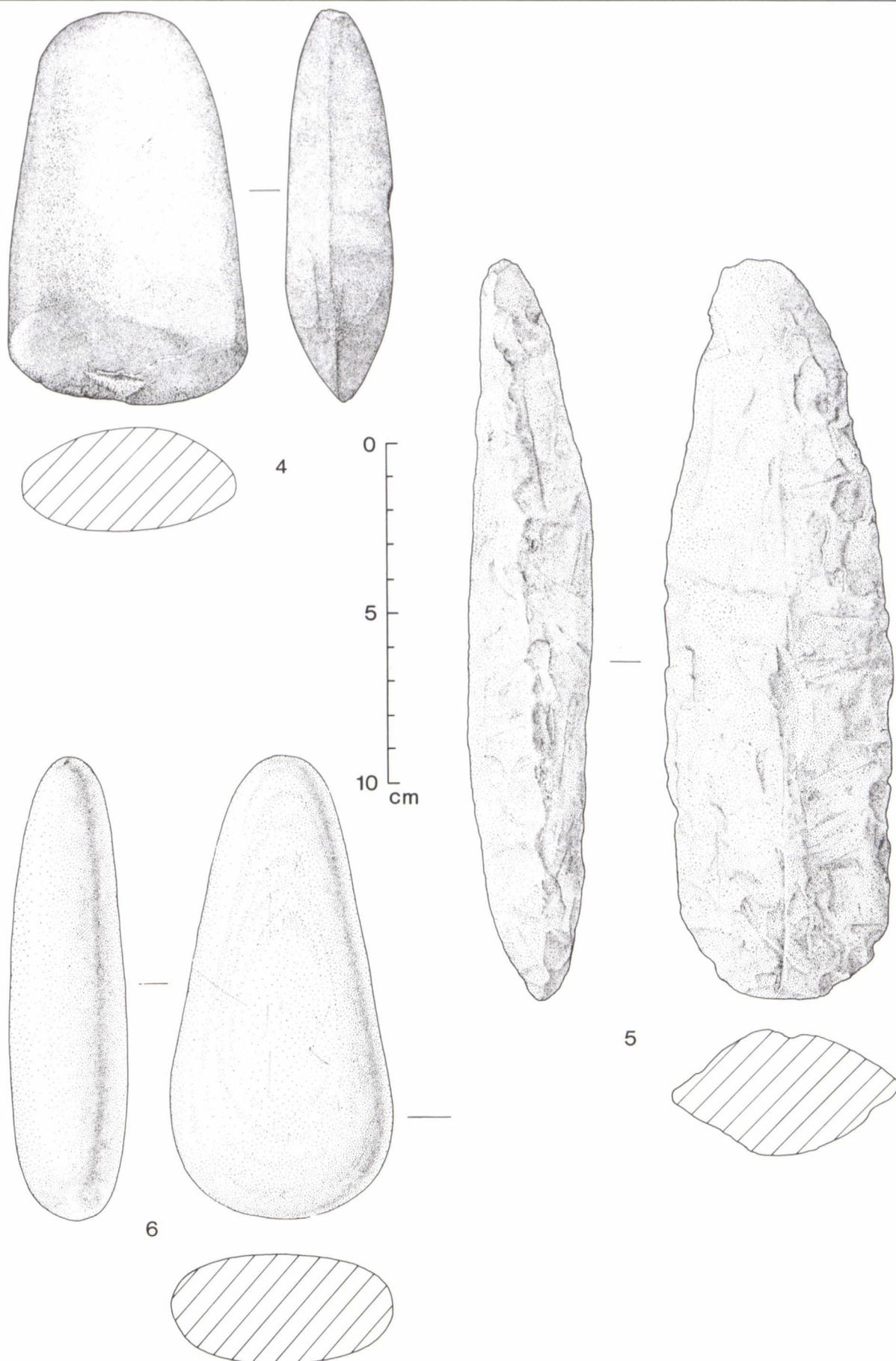


Figure 3: Neolithic stone axes from Sefton District, Nos 4-5, and Wirral District, No. 6.

A polished flint axehead was found in a field by the farmer in about 1978. It came from an area on a sandy sub-soil which had previously been subjected to commercial extraction. The method of excavation and reinstatement means that the location quoted is very likely to have been near to its original findspot. The findspot is located at a height of c.65m OD at the foot of the Billinge ridge, adjacent to the western side of Holland Moss.

Dimensions: L. 140mm; B. 64mm; Th. 21mm; Wt (Not recorded)

#### Sefton District

**No. 4. Fig. 3** Little Crosby  
SD 294024 SMR 2902.05  
Liverpool Museum Accession No. 1975.340.

A polished stone axehead was found on the beach at Hightown in 1975, on peat overlying glacial clay. Macroscopic inspection suggests it may be a siltstone.

Dimensions: L. 116mm; B. 62mm; Th. 32mm; Wt 341gm.

**No. 5. Fig. 3** Little Crosby  
SD 313025 SMR 3102.01  
Liverpool Museum Accession No. 1976.83.

A roughout of a stone axehead was found in 1975 on a sandy ridge adjacent to an area of peat, to the west of Little Crosby village. Macroscopic inspection suggests the stone is a siltstone. It is thought that axes may have been transported in this form rather than as the finished polished article, with the finishing being undertaken near to or on the settlements.

Dimensions: L. 218mm; B. 63mm; Th. 34mm; Wt 634gm.

#### Wirral District

**No. 6. Fig. 3.** Barnston  
SJ 281836 SMR 2883.01  
Liverpool Museum Accession No. 50.39.34.

A polished stone axehead was donated in 1941, although the circumstances of the find were not recorded at the time of donation, except that it came from 'Woodcroft in Barnston' and may have been found about 1910. The donor's son suggests this ought to refer to a field now known as Rookery Field. This location would place it close to the eastern ridge of Barnston Dale (SJ 284 831). The type of stone has been identified as a possible Group XV product (Clough and Cummins 1988, 219), a micaceous sub-greywacke, whose source is in the southern Lake District.

Dimensions: L. 137mm; B. 65mm; Th. 35mm; Wt 433gm.

**No. 7. Fig. 3** Bidston  
SJ 282903 SMR 2890.01  
Liverpool Museum Accession No. 1969.219

A black, well polished stone axehead was ploughed up in 1916. There is no sign of damage to the axe, other than a little post depositional pitting on one face, suggesting it may never have been used. The approximate location places it on the southern slopes of the ridge overlooking Bidston Moss. It is made of amphibolite (Clough and Cummins 1988, 219), likely sources of which could be Southern Scotland or the Lake District.

Dimensions: L. 129mm; B. 44mm; Th. 27mm; Wt 213gm.

**No. 8. Fig. 3.** Eastham  
SJ 345797 SMR 3479.02  
Private ownership

A polished flint axehead, recorded as coming from a garden in 1985, was handed in for identification. The findspot is located on the eastern ridge of the Dibbin valley. It is made from an orange/light grey mottled flint, and has been retouched at the butt end at a later date. The proportions of the axe are difficult to parallel in local Neolithic contexts. It may indeed be of this date, as the Museum collections include two flint axes of very similar proportions and cross-section with Danish provenances (Liverpool Museum Acc. Nos 54.184.227 and 54.184.195). There is no evidence to decide whether the Eastham example is either a modern or prehistoric import.

Dimensions: L. 165mm; B. 77mm; Th. 29mm;

**No. 9. Fig. 4.** Higher Bebington  
SJ 327858 SMR 3285.01  
Liverpool Museum Accession No. 64.158

A ground stone axehead was found in a garden in 1964, on a gentle east facing slope of a sandstone ridge at about the 100m contour. Macroscopic inspection suggests it is a siltstone.

Dimensions: L. 147mm; B. 50mm; Th. 20mm; Wt 200gm.

**No. 10. Fig. 4.** Noctorum  
SJ 290877 SMR 2987.01  
Private ownership

A polished stone axehead, for a time loaned to the Museum, is recorded as coming from a rough road surface in the Fender valley in c.1976. It is made of

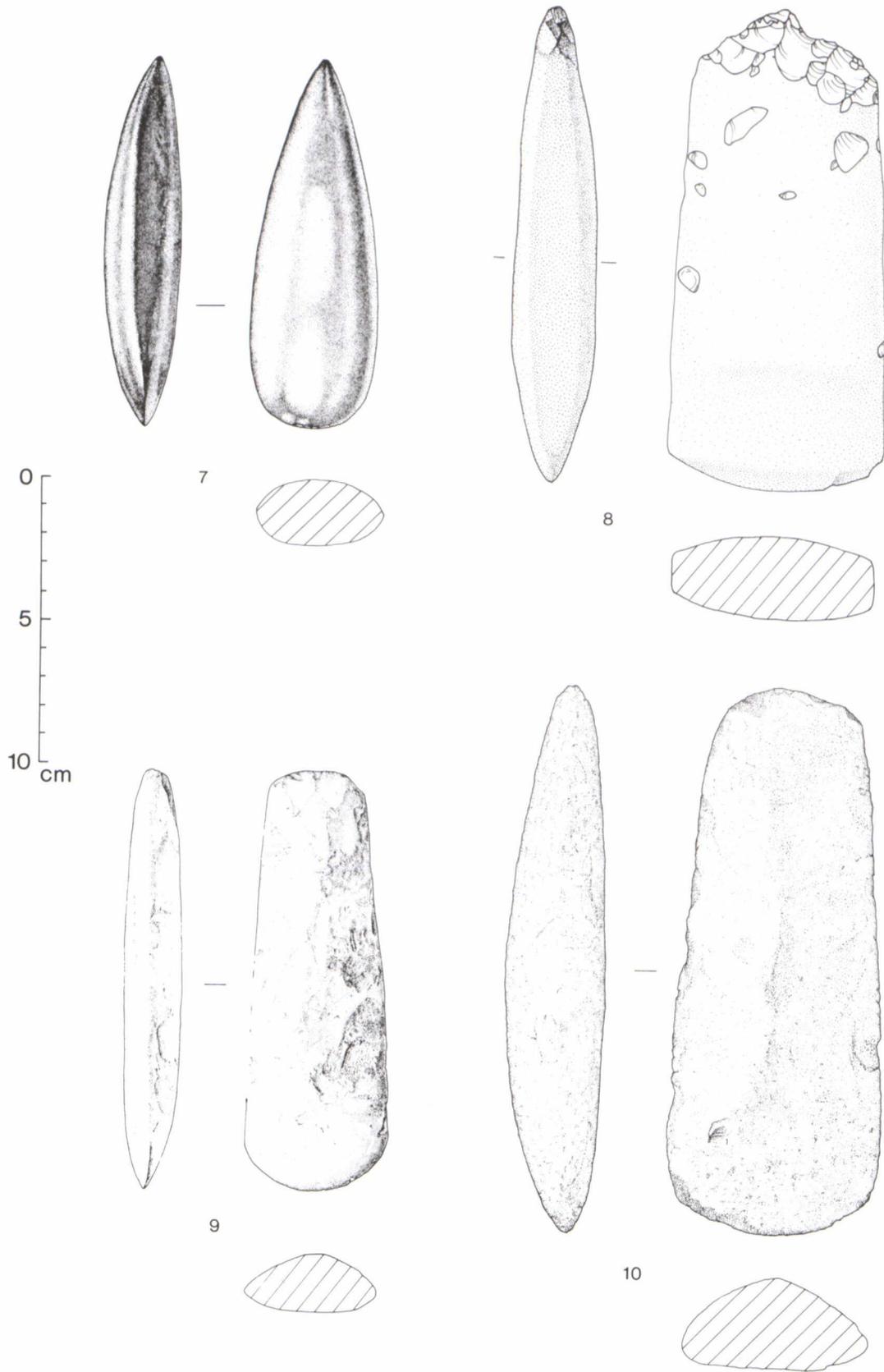


Figure 4: Neolithic stone axes from Wirral District, Nos 7-10.

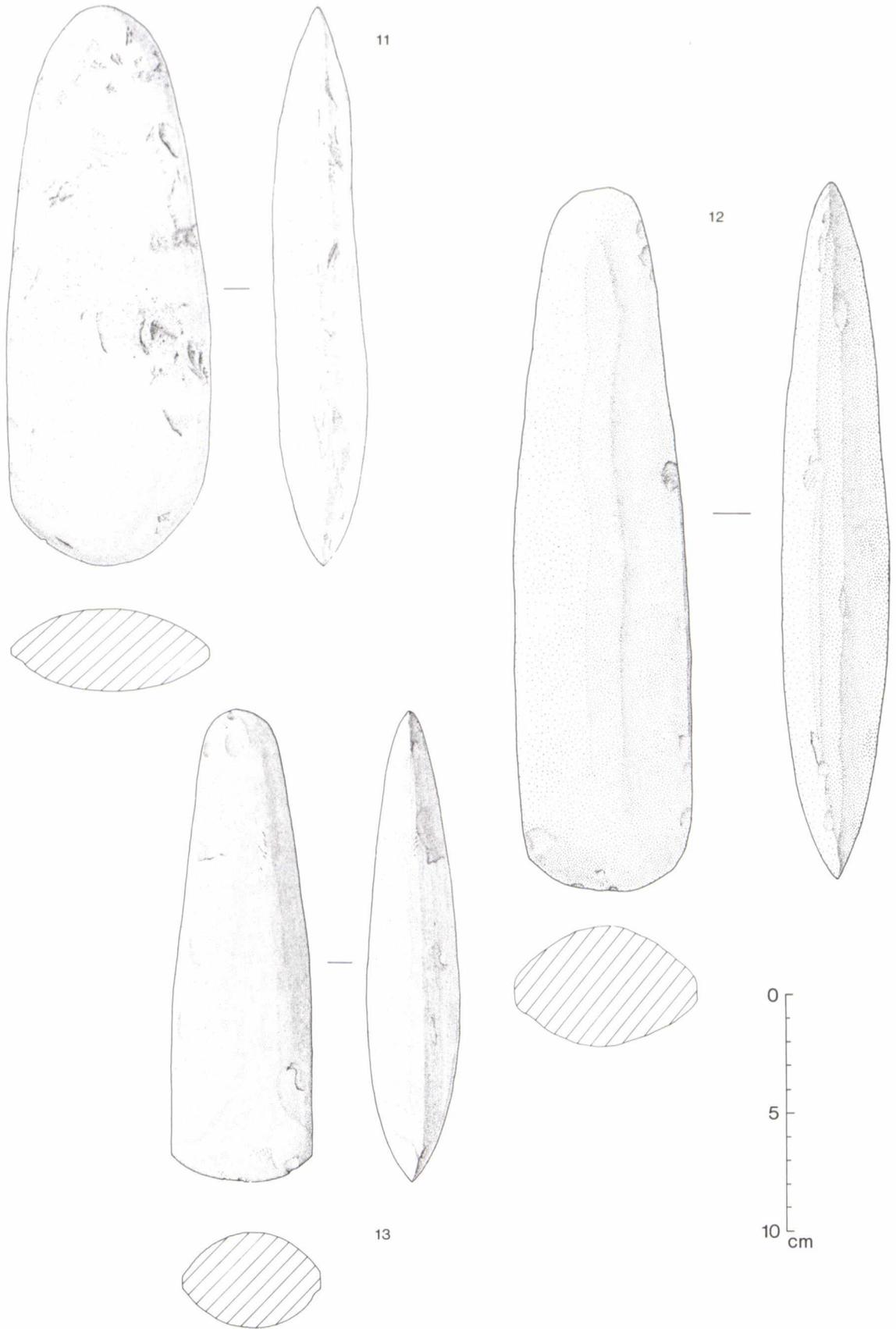


Figure 5: Neolithic stone axes from Wirral District, No. 11, and Cheshire Nos 12-13.

rhyolite, a fine grained lava which outcrops in several parts of Britain, including the southern uplands of Scotland, the Lake District, the Welsh borders, Cornwall, and other locations.

Dimensions: L. 191mm; B. 74mm; Th. 34mm; Wt (not recorded)

Warhurst (1977), 49 and Plate 19.

### Cheshire

**No. 11.** *Fig. 5.* Little Neston  
SJ 316780  
Private ownership

A polished stone axehead was found in a field in 1989. Macroscopic inspection of the stone suggests it is a Welded tuff or Ignimbrite, the likely source of which should be either North Wales or the Lake District. Three other axeheads have been found at separate locations in the vicinity, within 1.5 miles of the Neston find. All three come from Willaston. One was found in 1911 (Shone 1911, 32) and cannot now be located. Another was found in 1970, which macroscopic inspection suggests is from a source at Graig Llwyd in North Wales (Anon 1973). The third axehead may have been found in 1970 also, but in a different location (P. Minter pers comm).

Dimensions: L. 240mm; W. 86mm; Th. 37mm; Wt 1075 gm.

**No. 12.** *Fig. 5.* Runcorn  
SJ 549814  
Private ownership

A large polished stone axehead, with faceted sides, of a type commonly found in the Cumbria area, was reported as coming from a pond in the Town Park, Brookvale, in 1986. This findspot is located near the summit of the high ridge that overlooks the river Mersey.

Dimensions: L. 297mm; B. 74mm; Th. 47mm; Wt 1460 gm.

**No. 13.** *Fig. 5.* Thelwall  
SJ 656875  
Private ownership

A polished stone axehead, with faceted sides, was found about one metre below the surface on farmland in 1989, and reported to the Cheshire County Archaeologist. It is made of a white stone which is difficult to identify macroscopically, but is probably not

from the known sources in the Lake District or North Wales.

Dimensions: L. 199mm; B. 59mm; Th. 39mm; Wt (Not recorded)

### Cumbria

**No. 14.** *Fig. 6.* Hodbarrow  
SD 180785  
Liverpool Museum Accession No. 53.49

A polished stone axehead was found in topsoil removed when mining began in the area in 1870. It has been identified as stone belonging to the Group VI products (Great Langdale).

Dimensions: L. 196mm; B. 76mm; Th. 43mm; Wt 832gm.

**No. 15.** *Fig. 6.* Maryport  
NY 0336  
Liverpool Museum Accession No. 1977.117.4

A small ground stone axehead was found at some date before 1977. Macroscopic inspection suggests it is of Lake District andesite.

Dimensions: L. 71mm; B. 39mm; Th. 22mm; Wt 89.3gm.

### Lancashire

**No. 16.** *Fig. 7.* Thurland Castle  
SD 611731  
Liverpool Museum Accession No. 54.86.87

A polished stone axehead (butt end missing) was found at some date before 1954. The stone has been identified as a Group VI product (Great Langdale).

Dimensions: L. 118mm (incomplete); B. 74mm; Th. 34mm; Wt 420gm. (incomplete)

**No. 17.** *Fig. 7.* Yealand Redmayne  
SD 494759  
Liverpool Museum Acc. No 54.86.88

Part of the cutting edge of a polished stone axehead was found in March 1933. The stone has been identified as a Group VI product (Great Langdale).

Dimensions: L. (incomplete); B. 58mm. Th. (incomplete); Wt (incomplete)

North (1934, 114 and figure 4).

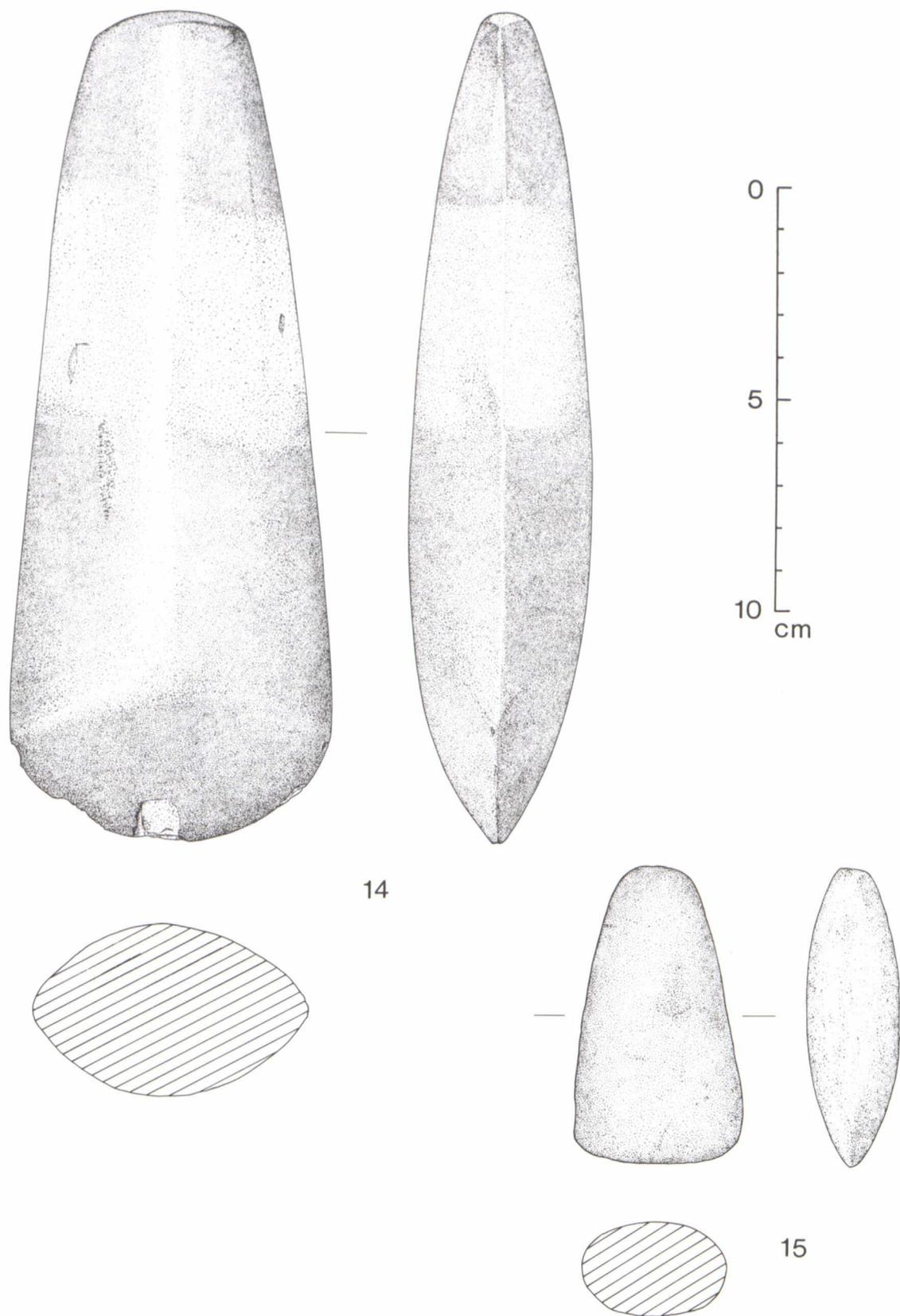


Figure 6: Neolithic stone axes from Cumbria, Nos 14-15.

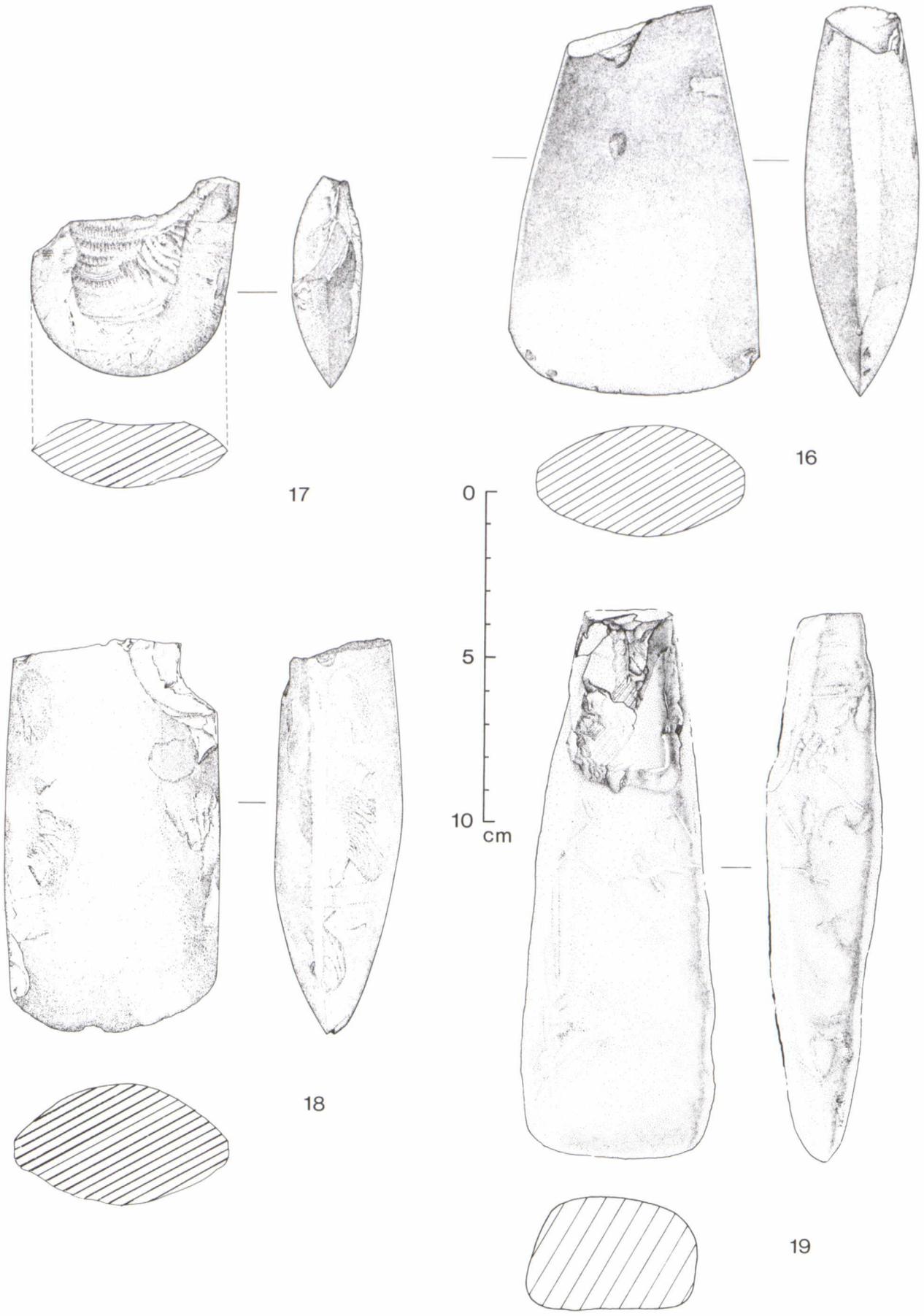


Figure 7: Neolithic stone axes from Lancashire, Nos 16-18, and adzehead from Knowsley District No. 19.

**No. 18. Fig. 7. Yealand Redmayne**  
SD 494759  
Liverpool Museum Accession No. 54.86.89

A polished stone axehead (butt end missing) was found in 1932. The stone has been identified as a Group VI product (Great Langdale).

Dimensions: L. (incomplete); B. 64mm; Th. 36mm; Wt 414gm. (incomplete)

North (1934, 114 and figure 4)

### Neolithic stone adzehead

*Knowsley District*

**No. 19. Fig. 7. Huyton**  
SJ 456900 SMR 4590.13  
Liverpool Museum Accession No. 1993.52

A stone adzehead was found whilst preparing ground for a car park in 1988. Macroscopic inspection identifies the stone as an ironstone, which is locally available in the boulder clay.

Dimensions. L. 163mm; B. 55mm; Th. 32mm; Wt 575gm.

## BRONZE AGE

### Archaeological Background

Metal was introduced into the country towards the end of the 3rd millennium BC, along with new pottery styles. One type, Beaker pottery, was foreign in development and may have been associated with the earliest metalwork (Burgess 1980). This very fine pottery is found mainly in inhumation burials, with a recurring group of finds, or a 'package', consisting of items such as flint barbed and tanged arrowheads, distinctive types of shale buttons, copper or bronze daggers, and sometimes leather working equipment. At the same time, many trends present in the Neolithic became more elaborate and the evidence strengthens for the development of a more hierarchical society, particularly concerned with the maintenance and exhibition of social prestige and status. This can be seen particularly in the deposition of rich metalwork in burials and hoards, the move towards individual rather than communal burial, and large ceremonial monuments (Bradley 1984a). The people who used Beakers played an important part in this process and the flint dagger (No. 34) is a significant indication of their presence in the area.

The metalwork of the North West has been dealt with comprehensively by Davey (1976) and Davey and

Foster (1975) and only a few new pieces have since come to the attention of the Museum. These include not only rare types that were prevalent during the early Bronze Age (c.2000-1400 BC) (No. 21), but also examples from the later part of the Bronze age (12th-8th centuries BC) (Nos 20 and 23), a period for which there is little archaeological evidence other than the metalwork in the North West.

From c.1800 BC new flint and stone types were added to the continuing elements of late Neolithic assemblages, the most useful in chronological terms being the commonly found barbed and tanged arrowhead (Green 1980, 1984), and the stone axe hammers and associated perforated implements (Roe 1979). These two categories form the bulk of the local Bronze Age record. The arrowheads were sometimes placed as grave goods in earthen barrows but are more commonly found by chance, perhaps having been lost on hunting expeditions. There is a fairly even distribution of arrowheads across the county, although there is a noticeable concentration in the area between Wavertree and Childwall in Liverpool. This area contains the burial sites of the Urn Mount Bronze Age cemetery in Wavertree (Smith 1868) and the late Neolithic tomb of the Calderstones, which was also probably still in use in the Bronze Age (Cowell 1991, 44; Cowell and Warhurst 1984).

The axe hammers have no accepted functional interpretation. They are generally found singly and on the surface, although a number have been reported as coming from burials, before the age of more scientific excavation. One such example is reported from the vicinity of one of the Bronze Age burials near Winwick (Robson 1860). They seem unlikely to have been as prestigious as the flint daggers.

Nationally, one example at least has been found with the remains of a wooden haft in the socket hole, which may have had a wedge driven into the top of it to hold it in place (Leahy 1986). They seem to have been too unwieldy in this form to have been used as weapons and probably the same objection could be made to their use as general purpose tools. One suggestion is that they were used as wedges to break timber into planks, although there are objections to this argument other than just size. One of the more favoured explanations is as an implement associated with farming, and particularly ploughing, where it might have been used as part of a composite implement.

Axe-hammers are relatively common across Britain, although the north western part has the greatest concentration. They are relatively rare in Merseyside in comparison to the Neolithic axeheads, but are found fairly widely across Cheshire where particular concentrations occur in the Pennine foothills around Macclesfield and the adjacent lowlands, but decrease in density westwards (Longley 1987). This may be taken as a reflection of the favoured settled arable areas in the region during the Bronze Age. These stone and flint

artefacts largely cease by the end of the earlier Bronze age, by about the 13th century BC, along with the main burial and ceremonial monuments, and most other types of flintwork and pottery.

The main evidence for the later Bronze Age in this region comes from the metalwork. A common feature of metalwork distribution in this period is its bias towards wetland areas and rivers, particularly in the form of hoards (Bradley 1984). This is seen as occurring at or shortly before a time of worsening climate, which is suggested as being a possible cause for the changes seen at the end of the early Bronze Age (Burgess 1974). Hoards are rare in the North West, the pattern being dominated by single finds (Davey 1976). The local metalwork pattern is not profuse enough, and the implications of the production and use of metalwork are not clear enough, for these pieces to assist in an understanding of the settlement pattern during this period. The palaeoenvironmental evidence suggests that the areas around the mosslands in the county were the focus of relatively concerted farming activity during the first millennium BC (Cowell and Innes 1994). The artefactual record for the period is too poorly understood to identify settlements associated with this activity.

## Bronze Age metalwork

### Wirral District

**No. 20.** *Fig. 8.* Heswall  
(Grid reference withheld on request) SMR 2582.04  
Private ownership

A bronze plain socketed axe with loop and square section was found on the ridge overlooking the river Dee in about 1980 by metal detector. It has been damaged along the top of the collar. The socket would have contained a wooden haft which would have been firmly secured to the loop with thonging. It is late Bronze Age in date (c.850-500 BC).

Dimensions: L. 106mm; B. 47mm (cutting edge), 39mm (socket); Th. 39mm; Wt (Not recorded)

**No. 21.** *Fig. 8.* Oxtun  
(Grid reference withheld on request) SMR 2986.04  
Private ownership

A bronze flat axe was found by metal detector on some waste ground on the eastern slopes of the valley of the River Fender in 1987. The surface is very pitted and the corrosion may conceal an incipient flange. The style of the axe places it in the Migdale-Marnoch tradition (Britton 1963), which is the earliest tradition of bronze metalworking in Britain (c.2000-1800 BC). This is the first such find of its type in the county, although three other similar types are known from adjacent parts of

Cheshire (Davey 1976).

Dimensions: L. 106mm; B. 58mm; Th. 11mm; Wt (Not recorded)

**No. 22.** *Fig. 8.* Poulton-cum-Spital  
SJ 324818 SMR 3281.10  
Private ownership

A plain, bronze palstave was found by metal detector in a field in 1988. The surface of the artefact is heavily pitted and corroded. This type of tool is a common feature of the middle Bronze age metalworking tradition (c.1500-1100 BC) and is a development of the flat axe. Here a stop ridge has been developed along the mid part of the face, with traces of low side flanges joined to the ridge to hold the haft in place.

Dimensions (approx.): L. 134mm; B. 33mm; Th. 27mm; Wt (not recorded).

**No. 23.** *Fig. 8.* Prenton  
SJ 303854 SMR 3085.07  
Private ownership

A bronze socketed axe with loop and square section was found close to the surface of a path in about 1969. The surface of the axe is decorated with three ribs which is a feature of the developed late Bronze age in northern England (c.850-500 BC). The socket would have held the wooden haft, while the loop would have been used to secure it to the haft with binding.

Dimensions: L. 105mm; B. 51mm (cutting edge), 41mm (socket); Th. 39mm (socket); Wt. (not recorded).

**No. 24.** *Fig. 8.* Wallasey  
SJ 277929 SMR 2792.04  
Private ownership

A bronze dagger (or dirk) was found on the beach near Leasowe by metal detector in about 1983. It has a rounded butt with two side notches and a flattened midrib along the blade. It probably dates to the transitional Middle-Late Bronze age tradition of metalworking (c.1100-850 BC).

Dimensions: L. 103mm; B. 23mm; Th. 0.2mm;

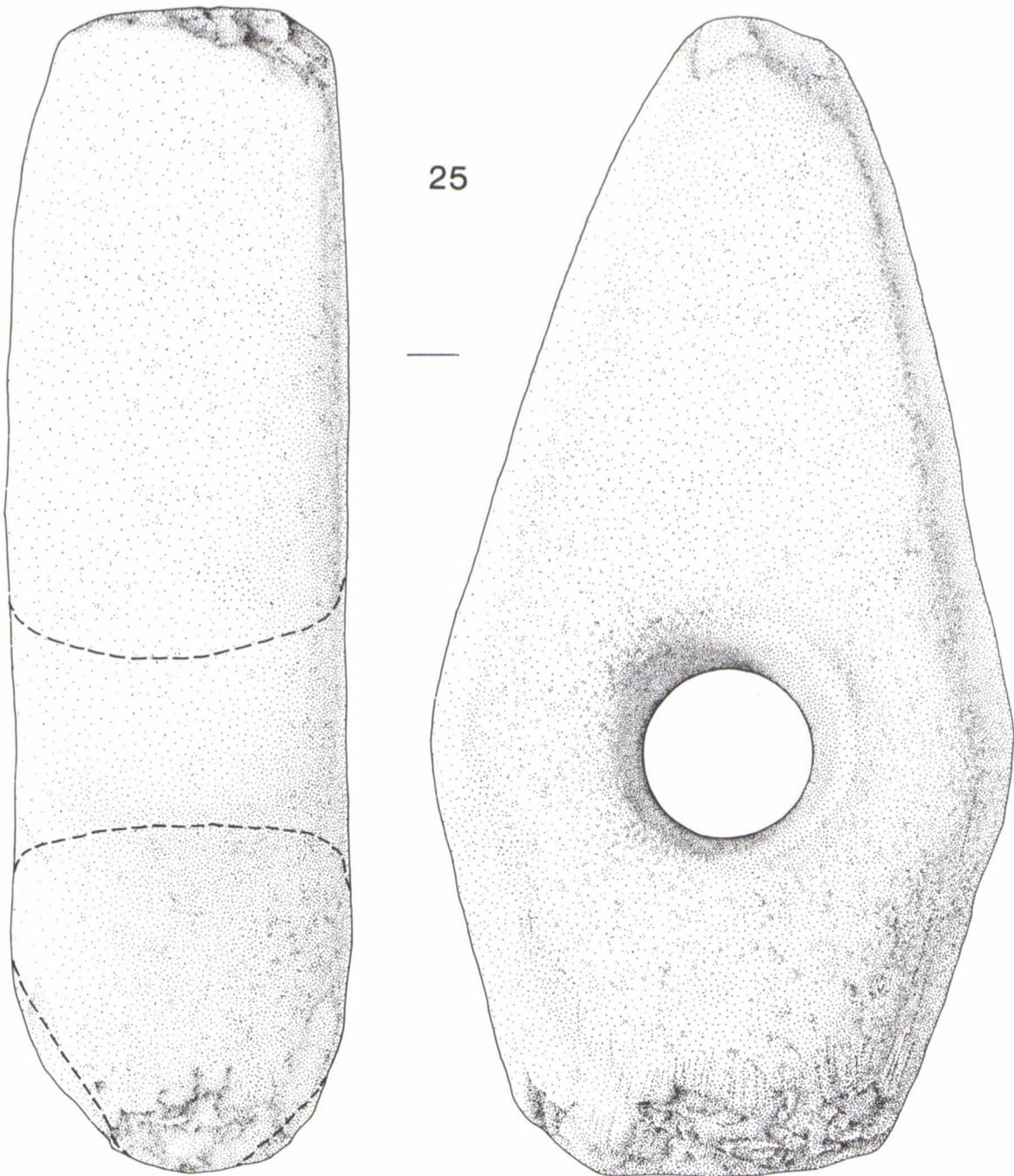
## Bronze Age stonework

### Liverpool

**No. 25.** *Fig. 9.* West Derby  
SJ 377934 SMR 3793.01  
Liverpool Museum Accession No. 39.4061



Figure 8: Bronze Age metalwork from Wirral District, Nos 20-23.



25

0 10 cm

Figure 9: Bronze Age stonework from Liverpool District, No. 25.

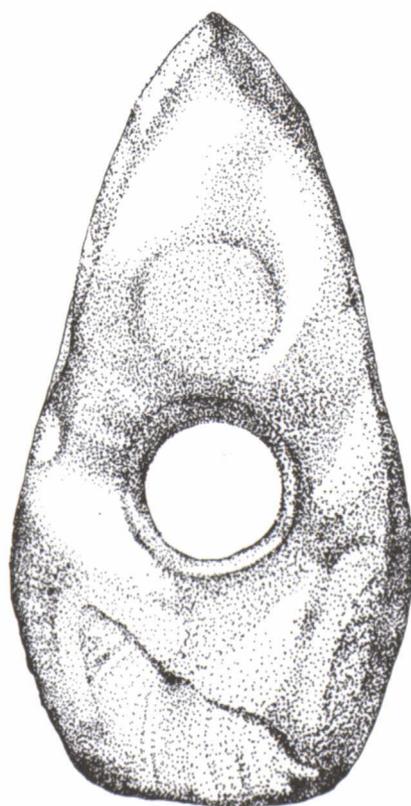
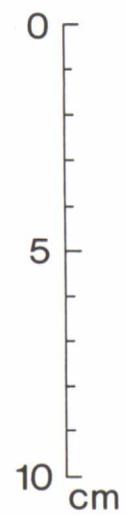
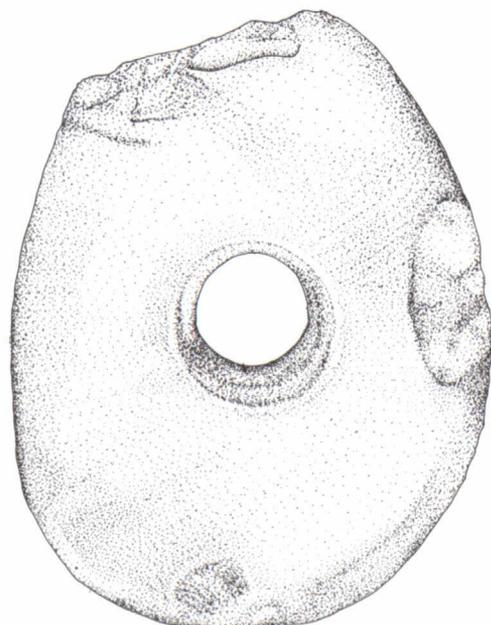
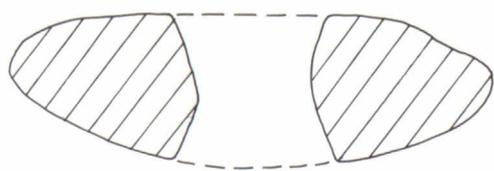


Figure 10: Bronze Age stonework from Cheshire, No. 26, and Lancashire, No. 27.

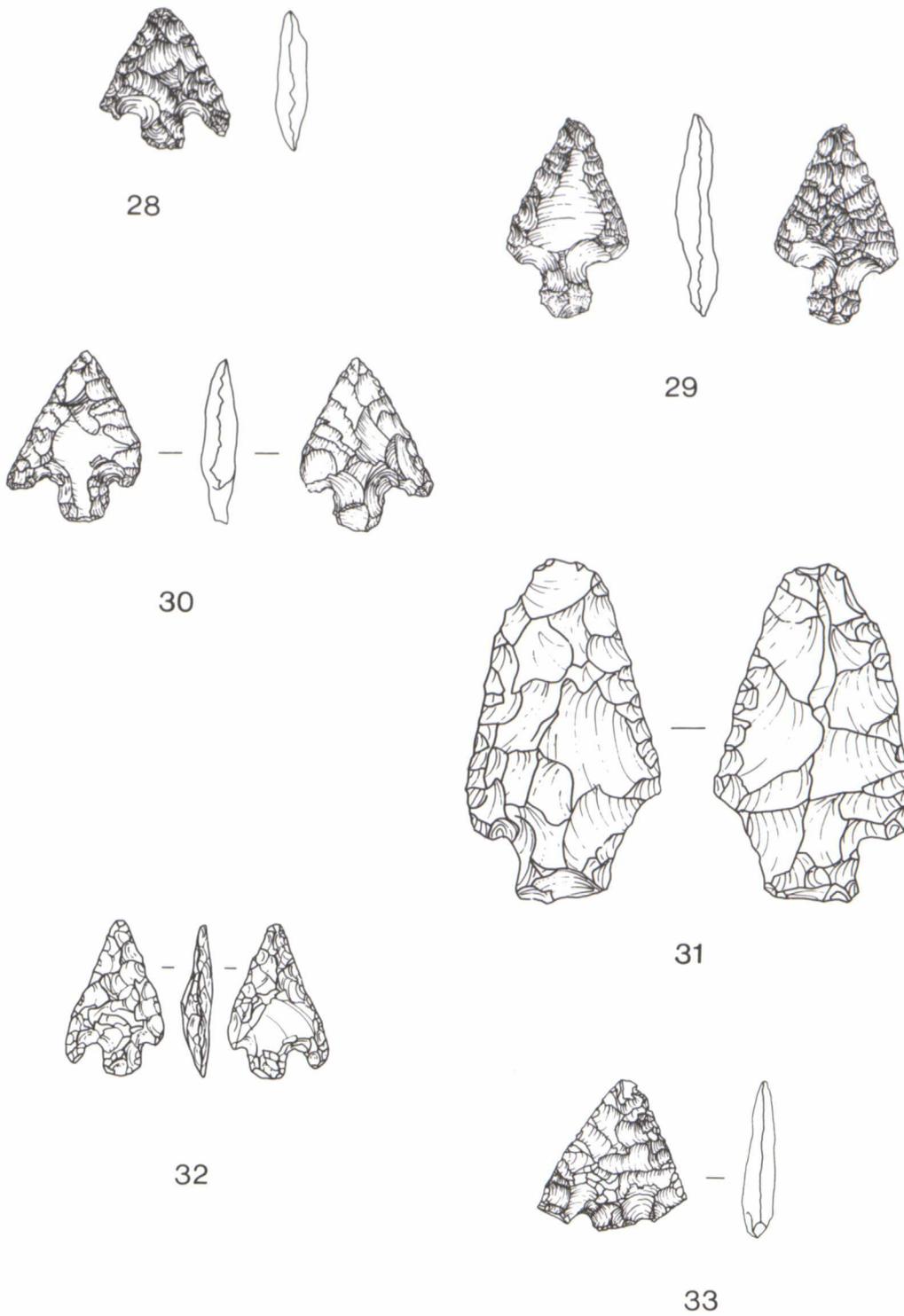


Figure 11: Bronze Age flint arrowheads from Liverpool District, Nos 28-31, and Wirral District, Nos 32-33.

A perforated stone axe-hammer was found at a depth of seven feet during excavations for an air-raid shelter in 1939. Macroscopic inspection identifies it as Lake District andesite.

Dimensions: L. 216mm; B. 105mm; Th. 58mm; Wt 2450 gm.

#### Cheshire

**No. 26. Fig. 10.** Risley  
SJ 667918  
Private ownership

A perforated stone mace-head was found 'on the moss' by metal detector about 1985.

Dimensions: L. 135mm; B. 104mm; Th. 34mm; Wt (not recorded)

#### Lancashire

**No. 27. Fig. 10.** Altcar  
SD 327062  
Private ownership

A perforated stone axe-hammer was found at the bottom of a field-ditch in c.1980. It is reported as coming from 'moss soil' overlying peat.

Dimensions: L. 135mm; B. 68mm; Th. 46mm; Wt (not recorded)

### Bronze Age flintwork

#### Liverpool District

**No. 28. Fig. 11.** Childwall  
SJ 410886 SMR 4188.01  
Liverpool Museum Accession No. 1976.60

A barbed and tanged arrowhead was found in a garden in 1976. It is made of a light grey flint.

Dimensions: L. 29.5mm; B. 18mm (incomplete); Barb Length (B.L.) (incomplete); Tang Length (T.L.) 7mm; Wt 2.06gm.

**No. 29. Fig. 11.** Childwall  
SJ 412881 SMR 4188.02  
Liverpool Museum Accession No. 50.61

A flint barbed and tanged arrowhead was found in a Nursery Garden in 1951. It is made of a lustrous, light grey-brown flint.

Dimensions: L. 21mm; B. 19mm; B.L. 3mm; T.L. 5mm; Wt 1.37gm.

**No. 30.** Wavertree  
SJ 405888 SMR 4088.11  
Liverpool Museum Accession No. 1982.379

A barbed and tanged arrowhead was found in a garden. It is made of a light grey flint.

Dimensions: L. 25mm; B. 19mm (incomplete); B.L. 2mm; T.L. 6mm; Wt 1.6gm.

**No. 31.** Wavertree  
SJ 396886 SMR 3988.24  
Private ownership

A medium grey, cherty, barbed and tanged arrowhead was found in a garden in 1984. This arrowhead is a distinct type from other local examples. It may belong to the Ballyclare (Green 1980, 118) group of large arrowheads commonly found in Ireland and occasionally in western Britain in the early Bronze Age. Conceivably, it could be, however, a more recent import, most likely from North America.

Dimensions: (approx.) L. 50mm; B. 28mm (damaged); B.L. 0.1mm; T.L. 0.9mm; Wt (not recorded)

#### Wirral District

**No. 32. Fig. 11.** Liscard  
SJ 308926 SMR 3092.33  
Liverpool Museum Accession No. 1993.176

A barbed and tanged arrowhead, found in a back garden c.1980. It is made of a lustrous beige/honey coloured flint.

Dimensions: L. 22mm; B. 14mm; B.L. 5mm; T.L. 6mm; Wt 0.9gm.

**No. 33. Fig. 11.** Thurstaston  
SJ 242850 SMR 2485.01  
Liverpool Museum Accession No. 42.17.301

A barbed and tanged arrowhead was found on Thurstaston Hill and bought from the finder, as part of a collection, in 1942. It is made of a lustrous, light grey flint. Other pieces from the collection include a blank for a thumbnail scraper and several edge-trimmed flakes in the same grey flint.

Dimensions: Arrowhead L. 22mm (incomplete); B. 23mm (projected); B.L. (incomplete); T.L. (incomplete); Wt 1.7gm.

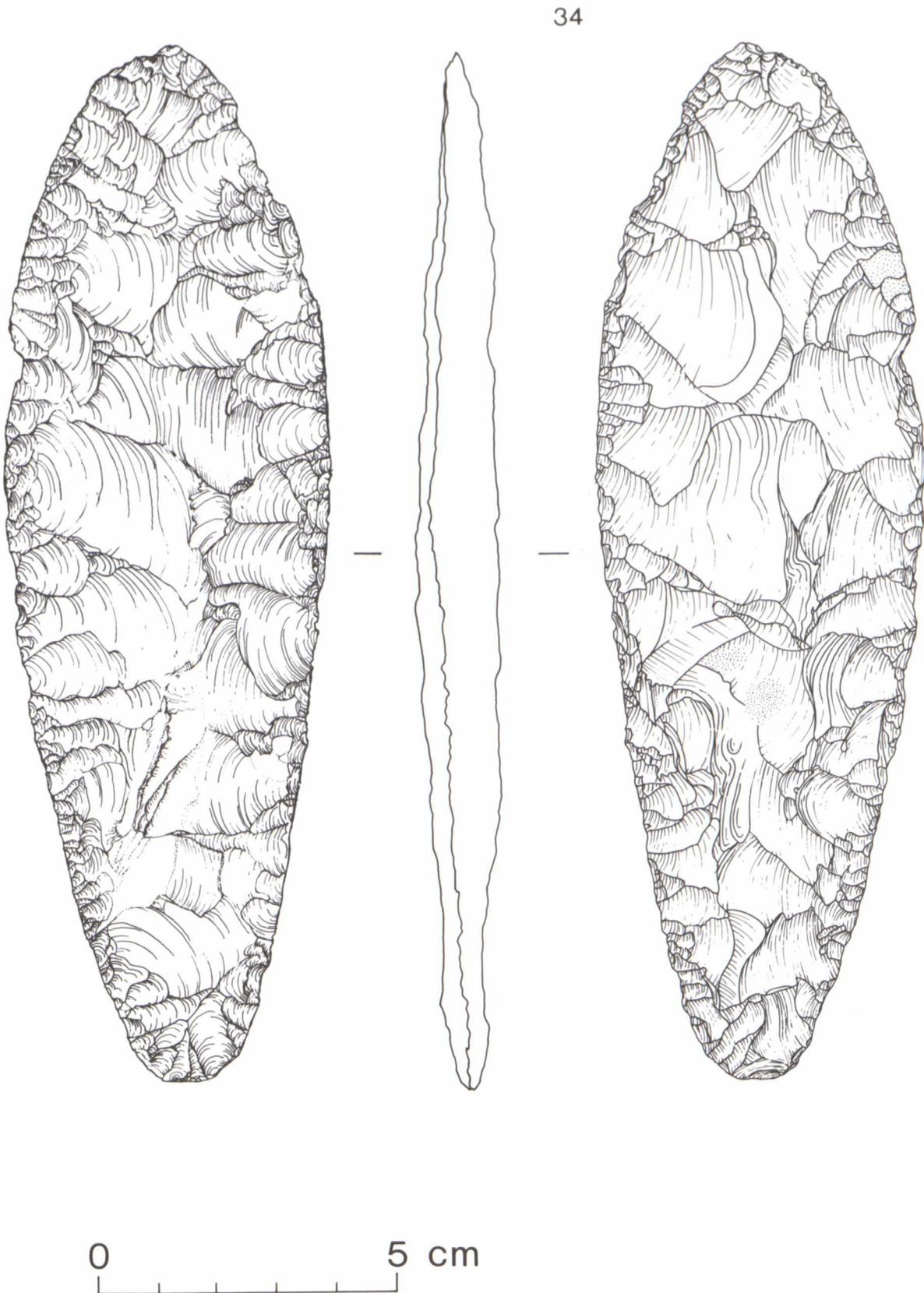


Figure 12: Bronze Age flint dagger from Cheshire, No. 34.

## Cheshire

No. 34. Fig. 12. Southworth with Croft  
SJ 619944  
Liverpool Museum Accession No. 1965.98

A flint dagger of Beaker type was found by Mr A. Glover, who was a schoolboy at the time, in a ploughed field near Winwick and was donated to the Museum in 1965. It is of exceptional importance, not only for its fine workmanship, but because it is of a type that is so rare in western Britain. It has been carefully chipped from a reddish orange type of flint that is probably local (from deposits laid down during a glacial period) and dates to between c.1850-1400 BC. The lower part of the dagger would have been set in a bone, wood, or possibly leather handle.

The nearest Beaker finds to this site are the pottery vessels from the Castleshaw Roman fort site east of Manchester (Thompson 1974) and a Beaker burial from Gawsworth in Cheshire (Longley 1987), while there are a few occurrences in Cumbria and Wales. In general, however, the phenomenon never seems to have been a feature of the Bronze Age in the North Western lowlands. Although this dagger came from the surface of a field it is located in an area where there are four known Bronze Age barrow cemeteries within a radius of c.1.3km (Freke and Holgate 1990). The possibility therefore arises that more barrows remain to be located in this area.

Dimensions: L. 175mm; B. 54mm; Th. 10mm; Wt 101 gm.

## Acknowledgements

As the recording of the finds has taken place over a number of years it has not been possible to ensure standardised entries and illustrations for all pieces in this paper. The bulk of the drawings have been done by three people. Jacqui Chadwick drew Nos 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11-13, 19, 21, 22, 24-29 and 33; Kay Lancaster drew Nos 3, 4, and 14-18 and Mark Faulkner drew Nos 7, 30, 32, and 34 and redrew Nos 8, 20, 23, and 31 from other peoples' originals. He was also responsible for all other aspects of the artwork. Thanks also go to a number of colleagues in Liverpool Museum: Geoff Tresise and Wendy Simpkins for identifying the rock sources for a number of pieces, Christine Longworth and Jo Hayward for information from the Antiquities' collections and especially to Susan Nicholson for all the detailed checking of entries and the provision of general background information. Thanks go to Adrian Tindall, the Principle Archaeologist for Cheshire for notification of No. 13 and to Bette Hopkins and Peter Iles, the SMR officers for Cumbria and Lancashire respectively, for information relating to finds from their counties.

## References

- Anon 1973 'Stray Finds Prehistoric' *Cheshire Archaeological Bulletin* 1, 4.
- Barnes B. 1982 *Man and the Changing Landscape*. Merseyside County Museums/Liverpool University Dept Prehistoric Archaeology Work Notes 3. Liverpool: Merseyside County Council/Liverpool University.
- Bradley R. 1984 *The Social Foundations of Prehistoric Britain*. London: Longman.
- Bradley R. and Edmonds M. 1993 *Interpreting the axe trade*. Cambridge University Press.
- Britton D. 1963 'Traditions of Metal-Working in the Later Neolithic and Early Bronze Age of Britain: Part I' *Proceedings Prehistoric Society*, 29, 258-325.
- Burgess C. 1974 'The Bronze Age' 165-232 in C. Renfrew (ed.) *British Prehistory. A new outline*. London: Duckworth.
- Burgess C. 1980 *The Age of Stonehenge*. London: Dent.
- Clough T.H. McK. and Cummins W.A. (eds) 1988 'The petrology of prehistoric stone implements from the British Isles' *Stone Age Studies* 2. London: Council for British Archaeology Research Report 67.
- Cowell R.W. 1991 'The Prehistory of Merseyside.' *J Merseyside Archaeol Soc*, 7 21-60.
- Cowell R.W. In prep a. *A Catalogue of Local Prehistoric Artefacts in the Liverpool Museum Collections*.
- Cowell R.W. In prep b. *The nature of prehistoric settlement in the lowlands of North West England: Field Survey in Merseyside and Cheshire*.
- Cowell R.W. In prep c. *Excavations on Mesolithic sites in Merseyside and their place in the Mesolithic of North West England*.
- Cowell R.W. and Innes J.B. 1994 *The wetlands of Merseyside, 1*, Lancaster Imprints 2. Lancaster University.
- Cowell R.W. and Warhurst M. 1984 *The Calderstones: a prehistoric tomb in Liverpool, Merseyside*. Liverpool: Merseyside Archaeological Society.
- Cummins W.A. 1980. 'Stone Axes as a guide to Neolithic communications' *Proc Prehist Soc* 46, 45-60.
- Davey P.J. 1976 'The Distribution of Bronze Age Metalwork from Lancashire and Cheshire' *J Chester Archaeol Soc* 59 1-13.

Davey P.J. and Foster E. 1975 *Bronze Age Metalwork from Lancashire and Cheshire*. Dept Prehistoric Archaeology: Work Notes 1. Liverpool: University of Liverpool.

Freke D.J. and Holgate R. 1990 'Excavations at Winwick, Cheshire in 1980: 1. Excavation of two 2nd millennium BC mounds' *J Chester Archaeol Soc* **70** (for 1987-8), 9-30.

Green S.H. 1980 *The flint arrowheads of the British Isles British Archaeological Reports, British Series*. **75**.

Green S.H. 1984 'Flint arrowheads: typology and interpretation' *Lithics* **5**, 19-39.

Leahy K. 1986 'A dated stone axe-hammer from Cleethorpes, South Humberside' *Proc Prehist Soc* **52**, 143-52.

Longley D.M.T. 1987 'Prehistory' 36-114, In: B.E. Harris B.E. and A.T. Thacker (eds) *A History of the County of Chester I. The Victoria History of the Counties of England*. London: Oxford University Press.

North O.H. 1934 'Some Recent Local Finds of Stone Implements' *Trans Cumberland Westmorland Antiq Archaeol Soc* **34**, 113-115.

Robson J. 1860 'Tumuli at Winwick' *Trans Hist Soc Lancashire Cheshire* **12**, 189-192.

Roe F. 1979 Typology of Stone Implements with Shaft-holes. 23-48 In: T.H. Mck.Clough and W.A. Cummins (eds) *Stone Axe Studies*. London: Council for British Archaeology: Research Report **23**.

Shone W. 1911 *Prehistoric man in Cheshire*. London: Simpkin, Hamilton, Marshall and Co. Chester: Minshull and Meeson.

Smith H.E. 1868 'An Ancient British Cemetery at Wavertree' *Trans Hist Soc Lancashire Cheshire* **20**, (New Series 8, for 1867-68) 131-146.

Thompson F.H. 1974 'The Roman fort at Castleshaw, Yorkshire (West Riding), Excavations 1957-64' *Trans Lancashire Cheshire Antiq Soc* **77** 1-13.

Warhurst M. 1977 'Stray Finds Prehistoric' *Cheshire Archaeological Bulletin* **5**, 49.

*The publication of this paper has been made possible by a grant from National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside.*