



LINCOLN
CITY & COUNTY MUSEUM PUBLICATIONS,
No. 2.

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**Pygmy Flint Age in
Lincolnshire.**

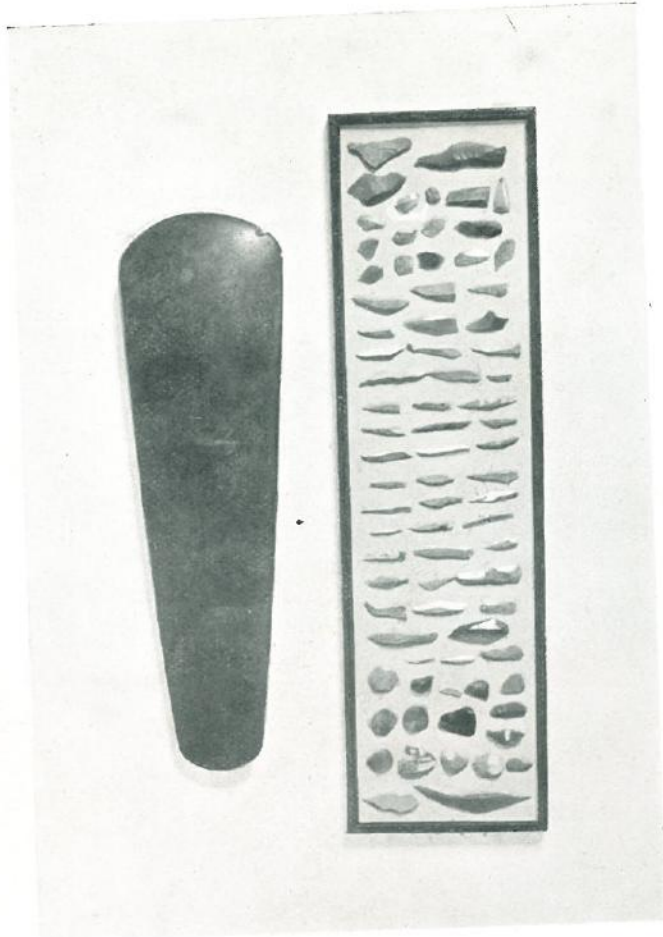
By Rev. ALFRED HUNT, M.A.

*(Reprinted from the "Transactions of the Lincolnshire Naturalists'
Union.")*

JULY, 1908.

PRICE ONE PENNY

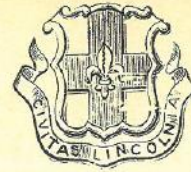
SOLD AT THE MUSEUM.



H. Prescott.

Photo by
The upper figure is a fine **POLISHED CELT** found at Cold Hamworth.

One of the trays of **PYGMY FLINTS** from the Museum Collection.



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THE PYGMY FLINT AGE IN LINCOLNSHIRE.

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE ETHNOLOGY OF LINCOLNSHIRE.

BY REV. ALFRED HUNT, M.A.

The subject of my address as President of the Naturalists' Union for the year 1907, is practically a New Subject, but concerns a very old period of Natural History.

Natural History points back to the Creation of Man as the crowning development of Creative Power. No higher form of beings that we are aware of, have been created since Mankind.

The study of Ethnology, or the study of Races and Tribes of men, has in regard to our own County been largely neglected in the past. To-day it is my privilege to call your attention to an interesting race of beings who have existed in our County, and left traces behind them of an unmistakeable character, and I venture to give them a title that will be clearly understood:—The Pygmy Race of Mankind in Lincolnshire.

A generation ago scarcely any man in England or abroad seems to have noticed the small diminutive flints which are now known to specialists as Pygmy Flints. Dr. Colley March, of Rochdale, Lancashire, seems to have been the first person in England to have noticed them and recorded his observations.

Contemporaneously, the late Mr. A. C. Carlleyle of the Archæological Survey of India, discovered many Pygmy Flints at Sohâgi Ghât, on the Northern Scarp of the Vindhya Mountains and left notes of them. More specimens were found in the same district by the same person in 1880—1881.

They were followed by my friends, W. H. Sutcliffe, Esq., of Littleborough, Lancashire, and The Rev. Reginald A. Gatty of Hooton Roberts Yorkshire,—the latter gentleman some eight years ago spoke to me about Pygmy Flints, and asked if I had ever come across any in Lincolnshire—at once my thoughts turned to Scunthorpe Common, and I asked Mr. Edgar Brown, then Manager, of the Scunthorpe Branch of Smith's Bank, to look out for them in August 1900, and in a short time, he found several specimens and was introduced to Dr. Gatty. Dr. Gatty has since

discovered, as the result of much close personal search, many thousands of Pygmy Flints at Scunthorpe.

PLACES WHERE FOUND.

Pygmy Flints are scattered in various places all over the world, and records of their discovery have now been made in Belgium, Palestine, Syria, Egypt, India, Southern Spain, France, North and Central Africa and in Great Britain.

In Great Britain they have been found at Glenluce in Wigtonshire, Scotland, various places in Ireland in East Lancashire near Rochdale, at Hooton Roberts in South Yorkshire, in the Isle of Man, at Bradfield West Riding of Yorkshire, at Hastings Sevenoaks, Sittingbourne, Mildenhall, Cambridgeshire, Lakenheath, Suffolk, Marton Common, Lincolnshire, but by far the largest number found in any one place in England is that of Scunthorpe Common, North Lincolnshire, and that discovery is not yet ten years old.

Since their discovery at Scunthorpe, Lincolnshire, specimens of these Pygmy Flints from our County have been exhibited in London, Dublin, Edinburgh, Manchester, and other places, and owing to the kindness of Mr. Edgar Brown many excellent specimens are now to be seen in the County Museum at Lincoln. Specimens representing various places abroad are to be seen in the British Museum—in cases Nos. 43 and 152.

Having stated where they have been found I now venture to try and describe what are Pygmy Flints. Practically they are a class by themselves. From my private collection I am able to exhibit a few specimens, and also slide views showing Lincolnshire specimens compared with specimens from India.

From these specimens it will be seen they are small pieces of flint, often only half an inch long, made into various shapes, and for convenience sake they have been classified as:—

- Crescent Shaped
- Triangular or Scalene
- Arrow Head
- Rounded and Pointed
- Chisel Shaped
- Trapezoid or Rhomboidal
- Flint Flakes like knives with serrated chipped edges at the back.

They are beautifully made and show extraordinary keen sight in those who made them—frequently one side only shows secondary working, and the chipping is so finely done that often twenty and thirty different chips have been made on a fine thin edge of flint in the length of half an inch.

The question has been asked, how may we know Pygmy Flints are the work of mankind? Practically by the same method that we know other Flint or Stone Implements are the handiwork of man—Examine these Pygmy Flints closely and you will be able to trace

- 1 The Bulb of percussion showing where the blow was struck to separate the flake from the Flint Nodule.
- 2 The Choncoidal Fracture running down the length of the flint.
- 3 The Dorsal ridges on the back of the Flint.
- 4 The secondary working along one edge.
- 5 The Patina or skin, the result of weathering or exposure.

These distinct characteristics prove these flints are no haphazard flakings from a flint core.

When you can pick up these Pygmy Flints and show all these peculiarities you are able to convince reasonable men that they are the work of a race of people, who, with keen vision and clever handiwork, were able to make tools which have outlived their own age and race by many thousands of years.

SIMILARITY IN DESIGN.

One point of great interest in these widely scattered Pygmy Flints is the great similarity in design. So much is this similarity carried out that if you place a Scunthorpe specimen beside one found on the Vindhya Hills in India, it is almost impossible to say which is from the one place and which is from the other.

This similarity in design has led many specialists to think that the Pygmy Flints of Scunthorpe are the work of a migrating people, who passed over from India through Asia and Europe to Britain. Amongst those who accept this theory are Dr. Gatty and Vincent A. Smith, M.A., of the Indian Civil Service, one of the greatest specialists we have on this subject.

WHAT WAS THE USE OF THESE PYGMY FLINTS?

Various conjectures have been made as to the use of these small flint implements. They must have been made for human daily use and need.

Arrow Points are easily accounted for as used in hunting—being it is supposed fastened to wood shafts; which is still the practice of Australian savages.

Fishing Hooks is another very natural suggestion, for some of the forms, when fixed with sinew or gut, the triangular form makes a specially suitable hook to catch in the throat of fish.

Knives is undoubtedly another use to which some specimens are adapted; the clear cut edge would, even after the lapse of thousands of years, cut flesh of animals at the present time.

Boring Tools for making holes to sew skins together for clothing purposes is also a natural theory for other specimens of these Pygmy Flint.

Chisels for scraping and shaping wood handles or hafts of their tools is also another suggestion, which is highly probable from the shape of the flints with a square cutting edge.

Skin Scrapers is still another use for which some specimens of the implements may have been made, by these people who lived by the chase—while it is also possible that other shapes were mounted in wood frames and used as saws, sickles and harpoons, as shewn in British Museum Handbook, fig 118.

Some of them may have been used for tattooing—as has been suggested, but certainly not a great proportion of the many thousands that have been found.

BY WHAT CLASS OF PEOPLE WERE THESE IMPLEMENTS MADE.

To begin with, these small implements were made by people with *keen vision*, the minute character of their work being more easily seen and appreciated under a magnifying glass than with the naked eye of an ordinary observer.

They were also *clever designers* as the persistent shapes of these implements show. It is not to an ordinary person an easy matter to chip out a piece of flint in the shape of these samples, the same figures or shapes are repeated in hundreds of instances.

Again they were *careful workers* as is seen by the way in which these flint implements are made—to-day men would have

to exercise almost the care of a jeweller if they wished to make implements equal in shape and accuracy to those found on the Scunthorpe Floor, made by these Pygmy Workers.

They knew how to *make a fire*, as many fragments of Charcoal have been found on the floors of their dwelling places.

As regards *their clothing* I am inclined to the idea that they clothed themselves but slightly, and what clothing they had was made of the skins of animals taken in the chase.

PYGMY SITES, STATIONS OR DWELLING PLACES.

One very interesting feature regarding Pygmy Stations, sites or dwelling places where these Flints are found is their close association with a *Peat Floor*. Monsieur de Pierpoint says, "He collected some thousands of Pygmy Flints on the high plateaux above the Meuse. Formerly a thick forest covered these mountains and in that district the small flints are mostly found near springs and away from the east winds." Both at Scunthorpe and on the Hills of the Pennine Range it is on, or in the Peat that these Diminutive Flints are discovered. Dr. Colley March found them in a bed of Peat six feet deep, in certain cases ten feet deep, and at an altitude of thirteen hundred and fifty feet above sea level. Dr. Gatty found them at Scunthorpe on the top of the Peat and below the wind blown sand 200 feet above sea level.

It was on the Peat that I and my friends, the Rev. R. N. Matthews, of Tetney, in the year 1900, and the Rev. Samuel Wild, of Dunholme, found numerous examples as recently as this last Spring, 1907. Dr. Gatty found as many as 200 implements on the floor of one habitation. These facts lead me to the belief that the Natural conditions or surroundings of Scunthorpe have completely changed since the time of the deposit of these implements.

I believe that the Natural conditions at Scunthorpe were very much like the conditions at the Ituri Forest of North Africa at the present day, where we see a Peat Deposit in progress. That the Pygmies lived in a warmer atmosphere at Scunthorpe than now exists in England, and that these people lived in communities in small huts, such as may be seen now among these living survivals of Pygmy People. They were in fact *Forest Dwellers*.

No pottery has been found with the Pygmy Flints in Lincolnshire, but a class of rude hand-made pottery has been found with the Indian Pygmy Flints, and entire skeletons of the Pygmy people have been found both in India and Germany. In India they dwelt in caves and rock shelters, but at Scunthorpe we have no trace of caves or rock shelters, therefore hut circles seem to be the only alternative to fall back upon as their dwelling places in Lincolnshire.

TO WHAT PERIOD IN THE STONE AGE MUST WE ATTRIBUTE THE PYGMY RACE OF MANKIND?

Here we have a problem that puzzles many at the present time. Mr. Read of the British Museum suggests a Neolithic Age or Bronze Period, while Mr. Vincent Smith does not agree with that, but inclines to the belief that they are to be placed at the end of the Paleolithic Age. Dr. Colley March, calls it The Early Neolithic Floor of East Lancashire.

One thing is certain, we do not find any smooth or polished stone implements on the Pygmy Floor. Another thing is equally true we do not find Pygmy Flints associated with Bronze or Copper implements, so that they were not metal workers.

The suggestion has been thrown out that the Pygmies were a weak race who were overcome by Neolithic Man, this may be true but we have the authority of Herodotus 2,000 years ago, and modern travellers like Dr. Wollaston of 1907, pointing out that the Pygmies were, and are at the present time, rather a fighting race of people. After considering all the evidence obtainable, I am inclined to think that the Pygmy Race must be placed in the Mesolithic or Middle Stone Age.

It is true that at one period, "There were giants on the earth in those days," so also it is true that there were dwarfs on the earth in other days. Was this race the Iberic Race?

It is ably argued by Mr. W. J. Knowles vice-president of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, that Neolithic Man is the descendant of Paleolithic Man.

The question before Ethnologists to-day is; How was this transition effected? Was it through a Mesolithic Age?

Because there are no references to the Pygmy Flint Age in the Standard Books of 30 years ago on Pre-Historic Man, such as

Boyd Dawkins, Canon Greenwell, Sir John Evans, and Mr. Mortimer of Driffield, some few people are prepared to question the reality of what are called Pygmy Flints.

To begin with, each of these authors referred to, have within the last few years become thorough believers in Pygmy Flints as the product of mankind. This is shown by their speeches at the recent meetings of the British Association at York and elsewhere.

Then let the doubtful person concerning Pygmy Flints turn to recent works on Pre-Historic Man, such as Mr. Charles H. Read's Handbook or Guide to the Stone Age, in the British Museum, published 1902, to Prof. Windle's Book on Remains of Pre-Historic Age in England, published 1904, to the Articles by Vincent A. Smith, late of India Civil Service, to Dr. Gatty, and other works, he will then I think, if open to conviction, be ready to admit there is more evidence for a Pygmy Race than he anticipated.

HISTORICAL REFERENCE TO PYGMY RACES OF MANKIND.

If we go back to the Ancients, we have the authority of Herodotus, Book II., Chapter 33, Page 51. That "The Nasamonians were captured and carried off by the Pygmy Tribe and led across extensive marshes, and finally came to a town where all the men were the height of their conductors and black complexioned under the middle height."

Homer's Iliad, Book III., Line 9, refers to Pygmy Nations.

Aristotle calls them Troglodytal—which would seem to indicate that they were Cave Dwellers in that age. Homer and Aristotle both place them near the sources of the Nile.

Pliny, Book VI., 19, and Philostratus Vit Apoll Tz III., 47, and others, place them in India, where in modern days many thousands of Pygmy Flints have been found.

The representation of Pygmy People is frequently met with on Greek Vases.

After 2,000 years of literary silence about Pygmy People, modern travellers like Captain Harrison, have brought over from the Ituri Forest, Pygmy People, and exhibited them in all parts of England.

SMALL DARK COLOURED PEOPLE UNDER THE MIDDLE HEIGHT.

Major Powell Cotton, only this year 1907, gives his experience

of life among the Pygmies of the Congo Forest, and describes them as "Small dark coloured people under the Middle Height."

Dr. A. F. R. Wollaston, also this year has returned to civilization through the Congo Forest, and the volcanic region of Mfumbiro, and says the tops of the extinct volcanoes are covered with dense bamboo, and inhabited by a Pygmy Race.

In Central Mexico we have relics of a Pygmy People. The dried head of one being offered in Mr. Steven's London auction room this year.

The last surviving Aztecs, a very diminutive people, I remember to have seen exhibited in Manchester 30 years ago.

All these instances point to Diminutive or Pygmy Races of Men scattered over the world—and in the flint implements left behind by these Pygmy People on the Scunthorpe Floor we have, I hope, a fitting subject for the Naturalists of the Lincolnshire Naturalists' Union to study for some years to come.

As the literature on this subject is so limited I venture to name the authorities quoted or referred to in this address.

AUTHORITIES CONSULTED.

Herodotus. Pliny.
Homer. Philostratus.

Aristotle.

British Museum, Guide to Stone Age, by C. H. Read, Esq.

Dr. Colley March, of Rochdale.

W. H. Sutcliffe, Esq., of Littleborough.

The Rev. Reginald A. Gatty, LL.B., of Hooton Roberts, Doncaster.

Dr. Sturge, formerly of Nice, now of Mildenhall, Cambridge.

The late A. C. Carlleyle, Esq., of the Archæological Survey of India.

M. de Pierpoint, of Brussels.

M. Thieullen, of Paris.

Sir John Evans.

Professor Boyd Dawkins.

Professor Windle, of Birmingham.

Major Powell Cotton.

Dr. A. F. R. Wollaston.

Vincent A. Smith, Esq., M.A.