

ETHNOLOGICAL NOTES.

No. 4.

By

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(Plates xxvii-xxxii.)

Basalt Hammers, or Pounders.

Through the courtesy of Messrs. Roy Mackenzie and Rex Burns, residents of Mangrove Mountain, some twenty miles west of Gosford, New South Wales, the writer was enabled to dig up, or acquire by gift, several rectangular hammers or pounders, invariably of basalt, of a type hitherto undescribed. The writer was already acquainted with this type of implement, there being several examples already in the Museum cabinets, but of which little was known.

The Trustees possess two from Bulga, Singleton district, New South Wales (registered numbers, E.24709 and E.26035), one from a rock shelter on Wyong Creek, New South Wales (E.11247), and another, not otherwise included, from Mangrove Mountain (E.33473). To these may be added some seven specimens from the collection of the late R. H. Mathews (E.25660-66). These latter were received in an undocumented condition. The locality, "New South Wales", was all the information available, but being also composed of basalt, and knowing that Mathews in his capacity as surveyor spent a good deal of time in the Singleton district, it may be allowed that his specimens were from that area, or southward to the Hawkesbury-Brisbane Water system.

Being associated with the finding of three such implements in a rock shelter, including one of especial interest, induced the writer to figure these relics in this paper. The specimen specially referred to (Plate xxvii, fig. 8), though smaller than the average, still retains the gum cement binding and stringy-bark packing which goes to prove that these implements were sometimes, if not always, hafted.

The three figured specimens (Plate xxvii, figs. 1, 3 and 8) were disclosed at a depth of eighteen inches, in the ashes, soil and debris accumulated in a sandstone rock shelter. Many others are known from the Mangrove Mountain area, and, almost without exception, found at a shallow depth, close to the back wall, which makes it appear that they had been cached by the owners.

The presence also of basalt chips in the rock shelters of that area seems to indicate that this material was used for knives and scrapers. This belief is supported by the almost entire absence of siliceous flakework. In this regard, mention should be made of the discovery of odd scarifiers¹ found so abundantly

¹ Etheridge, R., and Whitelegge, T.—*REC. AUSTR. MUS.*, vi, No. 4, 1907, p. 238.