

AN ANALYSIS OF THE LARGE STONE IMPLEMENTS FROM FIVE WORKSHOPS ON THE NORTH COAST OF NEW SOUTH WALES.

By **FREDERICK D. MCCARTHY.**
The Australian Museum, Sydney.

(Figures 1-22, Plates xxxvi-xxxix.)

The 445 implements dealt with in this study are from aboriginal workshops at Point Plomer, Tacking Point beach, Dark Point, Anna Bay and Morna Point, on the lower north coast of New South Wales. Some of the specimens from Dark Point, Anna Bay and Morna Point were collected by the late W. W. Thorpe, and the others by the Rev. A. J. Barrett, Miss Lesley Hall and the author, while those from Point Plomer were collected during a week that I spent in the district in April, 1945. In addition, Mr. H. J. Wright, of Sydney, has kindly made available a considerable number of specimens in his collection from the three first-mentioned localities. The implements analysed comprise trimmed coroids, nuclei, blocks, *worimi* and *karta* slices, uniface pebbles, edge-ground axes, and a few normal flake and blade implements, including *elouera* and *bondi* points. This is the fifth paper of a series of analyses of sites in New South Wales from which reasonably complete collections are available.

All of the above workshops occur on the recent coastal sand-dunes, and they were apparently in use by the aborigines right up to the time of white occupation, when steel and iron replaced the stone and bone implements. This conclusion is indicated by the physiographic changes that have taken place in the area, as revealed by Dr. A. Voisey (1934, p. 342, fig. 1; 1935, pp. 88-103, fig. 1; 1939, map 1); he has shown that an

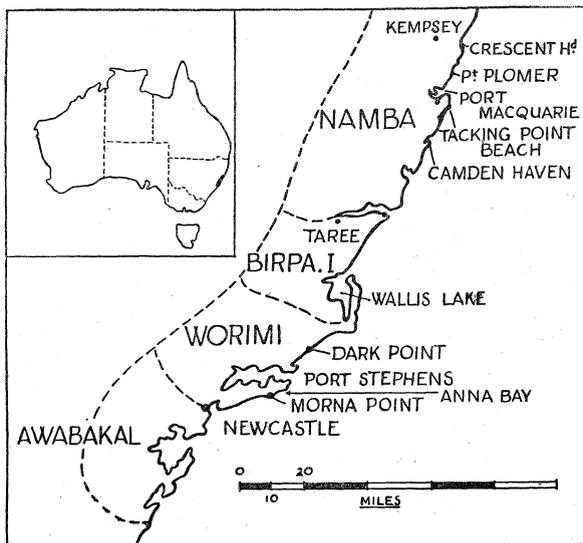


Fig. 1.—Map showing the location of the workshops herein described, and the tribes, of the lower north coast of New South Wales.

ancient shore-line existed along this coast from Tacking Point to Trial Bay and that the area, up to thirteen miles wide, between the old and new shore-lines was infilled by deposition. The old middens and feeding grounds were then abandoned and the later ones, including those described in this paper, built up along the new coast line. A description has already been given of a small number of implements (McCarthy, 1943b) from shell middens along this old shore-line, but it is intended to undertake a detailed study of the deposits at a later date because they may reveal important data about the prehistory of the north coast. These analyses of implements from the later workshops are submitted as a preliminary approach to the general problem of the advent of man and the implements he used in this area. Thorpe (1928, pp. 244-45 and map) drew attention to a similar problem in the Hunter River basin when he stated that "implements found above the thirty-foot contour might be ascribed to comparative antiquity", but here again detailed investigation is necessary.

Classification.—As new evidence is brought forward it is possible to gain a clearer understanding of typological problems. From data now available it is clear that the *worimi* is, technically, a slice of the cleaver type, although I have previously classified it as a block. The *karta*, as I have used the term on the coast of New South Wales, includes both slices and blocks, although they have previously been regarded as coroids.

POINT PLOMER.

Point Plomer is a prominent headland situated at the northern end of a beach eight or nine miles long, which extends southward to Port Macquarie. The Point consists of several high, rounded, grassy headlands, the rocky faces of which are now torn into rugged blocks and clefts by the sea and winds. The workshop is on the dunes right at the end of the beach and adjoins the southern headland of the Point. At the present time the site is limited to a trough, about one furlong long and fifty yards wide, in the dunes furthest from the beach. Previously, however, according to the late Mr. T. Dick's photographs, it covered a much larger area and extended to the back of the beach, but wind-blown sand has built up recent dunes over this eastern portion. Although no shell-midden deposit is now apparent as a layer in the dunes, there are patches of dark ashy soil to be seen. One of Dick's photographs shows a small mound thickly strewn with pippies (*Plebidonax deltoides* Lamarck), but elsewhere these shells are rather thinly scattered at the present time. Pippies are obtainable in quantity on the beach between high and low water. Here and there on the workshop are to be seen fireplaces marked by assemblies of burnt stones, some of which are suitable for grinding into red pigment. Another portion of the workshop at the base of the headland is now overgrown with grass.

The manufacturing techniques and uses of the implements at Point Plomer are discussed at the end of this paper.

Materials.—Dr. Voisey (1934, p. 340) stated that Racecourse, Delicate, Nobby's and the Big Hill headlands are composed of Permian (?) rocks of the Kempsey series, in which occur bands of sandstone, tuffs, mudstones, claystones, and inclusions of grey shale. The sandstones and tuffs vary greatly in colour, texture and composition, and may be termed tuffaceous sandstones. These remarks also apply to Point Plomer, where pieces broken off the two headlands by wave action are washed onto a small beach between them as smoothed pebbles and boulders. The aborigines took the latter to the sand dunes to make their implements. I might mention that the nature, occurrence, and use of the materials are the same at Crescent Head, about 10 miles to the north (McCarthy, 1941c, p. 22).

Occasional implements of a brown chert, brought from elsewhere, also occur. Merewether chert is not represented and was apparently not traded so far northwards.