

REPORT ON THE MESOLITHIC INDUSTRY OF WESTON WOOD, ALBURY

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INTRODUCTION

The following report on the Mesolithic flints from Weston Wood has been prepared by Mrs. Machin at the request of the Director of the excavation, Miss Joan Harding, who has agreed to its publication in advance of the final report on the site. An interim report was published in 1964 in *Surrey Archaeological Collections*, Vol. 61. The site is in the parish of Albury (TQ 053485) on the Lower Greensand near the North Downs trackway. A Mesolithic occupation level was found 0·60m below the Late Bronze Age levels and Mesolithic type flints occurred both in this occupation level and mixed with the Bronze Age material above. The present report, however, includes only flints from the clearly stratified Mesolithic levels.

THE FLINT

All flint used for the production of implements appears to be in nature identical and can be assumed to be from the same source. The cortex appears fresh and unweathered which suggests that it was quarried or derived from areas where the fresh material was near enough to the surface to be exposed seasonally by weather action.

The flint is mainly grey in colour, with lighter spots and includes cherty portions, often large. Its texture is frequently rough and unyielding and much has been discarded after attempts at tool-production.

The majority of cores are worked from only a small area of the platforms. Cores from which all the cortex has been removed are rare, platforms are much battered and many flake-beds end in shattered fractures. Rejuvenators are mainly thin segments of triangular section. Many cores are rejected without any attempt at a renewal of the platform.

There is some very high quality flint present. Much of this is black. It accounts for some small satisfactorily worked blade-cores.

A pearl-like appearance is shown on some of the smaller implements and fragments, when struck from a faultless portion of the grey matrix.

Good specimens of flint are glossy when fresh but dull on exposure. The wind-blown sand on which much of the material was found preserved the gloss. A re-use of cores and other pieces is suggested by specimens which present both glossy and dull areas. This, and the presence of thermal fractures, indicates that the site was used for more than one season. Very little patina is found. A few pieces show iron staining. Several have a chalk patina accounted for by chalk washed down from a largely denuded heap of chalk and flint in the Bronze Age/Iron Age horizon. A few pieces have a blue patina.

ANALYSIS OF THE INDUSTRY**Microliths**

Total—112 Unclassified—29

OBLIQUELY BLUNTED POINTS Total—49

Distal portion of blade worked	11
Bulbar end of blade worked	20
Bulb present	3
Uncertain	14
Showing micro-burin facet	10
With pointed base	11
With broken point and broken base	8
Broken point only	9
Broken base only	16
Steep retouch only	45
Shallow retouch only	2
Oblique retouch right only	7
Oblique retouch left only	42
Shallow inverse retouch (no other retouch)	1
Opposed retouch at tip, steep	1
Opposed retouch at tip, shallow	1
Faint opposed retouch (perhaps use)	1

NEEDLES (retouch on 2 sides) Total—9

Point both ends	1
Broken near middle of blade	1
Broken 'base'	5
Hinge fracture as base	1
Retouch round base	1
Steep retouch, both edges	5
As above, but with step flaking forming steep back	1
Shallow retouch both edges	1
Steep retouch one edge, shallow other, with steep at tip of shallow edge	1
Steep retouch near tip, shallow and inverse near base	1
Steep and shallow alternating on extreme of both edges	1
Extreme point broken	3

LANCEOLATES (retouch down one edge only) Total—4

Steep retouch down one edge	4
Microburin facet	1

RETOUCHED MICROBLADES (like Obliquely Blunted Points, but retouched to base) Total—7

Steep retouch	7
Broken base	4
Broken tip	2
Broken both ends	1
Microburin facet	1
Showing use	1
Consisting of distal portion of blade	1
Consisting of bulbar portion of blade	4
Uncertain	2

SINGLE POINTS (blunted down one edge and obliquely at tip) Total—4

Distal portion of blade	2
Uncertain	2
Retouch to base left	1
Retouch to base right	3
Steep retouch both edges	3
Steep retouch on long edge, shallow on short edge	
Microburin facet at one end	1
Microburin facet at both ends	1

TRIANGLES Total—31

Scalene	29
Isosceles	1
Sub-triangle	1
i Steep retouch on 2 edges, scalene	16
ii Steep retouch on 2 edges sub-triangle	1
iii Steep retouch on 3 edges	3
iv Steep retouch on 2 edges, shallow on 1 scalene	2
isosceles	1
As above, with shallow retouch at top only, of third edge	4
As above, with shallow retouch at bottom only, of third edge	1
As above with inverse steep retouch on 2 edges and shallow retouch at top only of third edge	1
2 edges steep retouch, 1 edge shallow and retouch blunting acutest angle	2
Microburin facet	2
Breaks	
Top and bottom broken	2
Top broken	4
Bottom broken	13
Distorted	1

RHOMBOIDS Total—5

Steep retouch on three edges	2
Steep retouch on four edges	1
Steep retouch on three edges, shallow on fourth	2

TRANSVERSE ARROWHEADS Total—3

Broad-based	3
On flake fragment	2
On blade segment	1
Steep retouch	3

MICROBURINS

36 either completed or attempted microburins are present, and can be classified as follows:-

Typical (bulbar portion of blade, show twist)	17
As above, with notch below effective notch	1
Blade notched and snapped	14
As above, with second notch, unused	1
Notched with no attempt at twist or snap	3

MACROLITHS

BLADES TRUNCATED BY STEEP RETOUCH Total—21

Oblique	15
Concave	3
Straight	3
One is also a saw.	

SERRATED BLADES Total—3

Saw edge on one edge only	2
Saw edge on two edges	1

HAMMERSTONES Total—3

STRIKE-A-LIGHT

One much worked and abraded finger of flint has been suggested as a possible strike-a-light. It shows iron staining.

AXES

Two tranchet axes are present. One is of cherty flint, of triangular section with a pronounced median ridge, where attempts to reduce this are shown by a line of splintering. The effective working end is broken as if by a heavy blow from its use. The second axe is of quadrangular section. The quality of the flint is good and though one side of its top has cortex remaining up to the area where it was removed by the tranchet blow, there is no median ridge. The secondary working is neat and the butt end is well shaped. A fairly sharp cutting edge remains.

The industry also includes the broken-off butt of a third axe, which is well-shaped and has some remaining cortex.

BURINS Total—18

Single-blow burins	15
Angle burins—concave	1
Angle burins—straight	2

Width of graving surface—Between 0.3 and 0.5 centimetres with three exceptions, of which one measured 0.7 and two 0.8 centimetres.

On struck flake	6
On struck blade	5
On broken flake	4
On broken blade	2
On rejuvenator	1

The question whether blades or flakes were broken to form a straight edge for the top edge of the burin is left open

Seven of the burins have retouch along their backs or on other edges, apparently with the purpose of blunting them to make them safer and more comfortable to hold.

SCRAPERS (FLAKE AND BLADE) Total—42

On blades from typical mesolithic cores	3
On large blade	1
On broken fragments	8
On rejuvenator	1

With cortex	27
Showing prepared striking platform	1

Length (measured along bulbar axis):

20-25 mm	4
25-30 mm	7
30-35 mm	4
35-40 mm	4
40-45 mm	0
45-50 mm	3
50-55 mm	2
55-60 mm	4
60-65 mm	2
65-70 mm	4
100-105 mm	1

SCRAPERS (FLAKE AND BLADE), continued

Breadth (maximum, at right-angle to axis):

15-20 mm	2
20-25 mm	10
25-30 mm	5
30-35 mm	4
35-40 mm	3
40-45 mm	3
45-50 mm	4
50-55 mm	1

Maximum Thickness:

5-7 mm	6
7-9 mm	9
9-11 mm	4
11-13 mm	9
13-15 mm	4
15-17 mm	1
17-19 mm	2

Angle of Scraper Retouch:

30°-40°	2
40°-50°	4
50°-60°	7
60°-70°	10
70°-80°	11
80°-90°	3

Shape

Convex	26
Straight	8

Bulbar end

Present	31
Missing	4

Extent of retouch

a. i	Retouch at distal end only	19
ii	Retouch at bulbar end only	1
b.	Supplementary retouch (adjacent to scraper edge)	
i.	Left edge only	3
ii.	Left edge, inverse only	1
iii.	Right edge only	3
iv.	Both edges	2
v.	Present on 1 edge, other edge broken	1

SCRAPERS (CORE) Total-9

On platform of typical Mesolithic blade-core	6
On thick 'finger' with much cortex	1
On thick long fragment with careful step flaking along one side	1
On thick finger-like piece, showing positive flake bulb. Careful step-flaking from two platforms forming steep side-scraper and keeled scraper respectively	1

Cores Total-263

Cores showing typical Mesolithic blade production	140
1 platform	165
2 platforms	80
3 platforms	5
2 platforms meeting to form axe-like edge	10
3 platform core of which 2 edges meet as above	1
Showing flake-beds but no clear platform	2

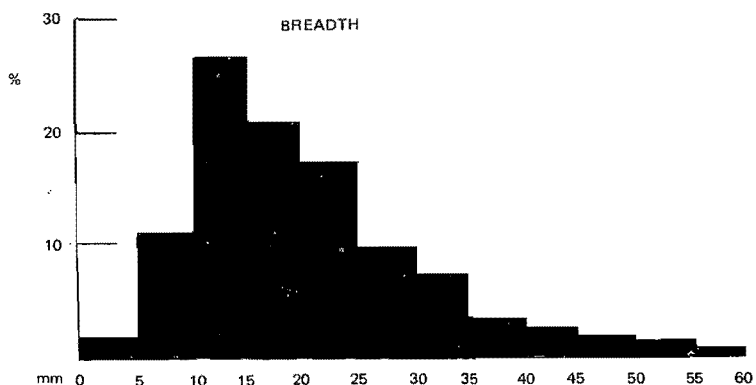
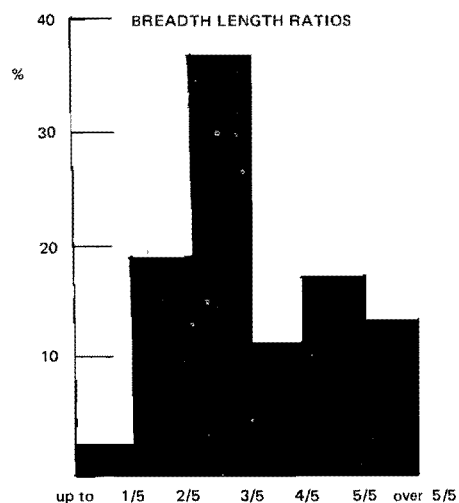
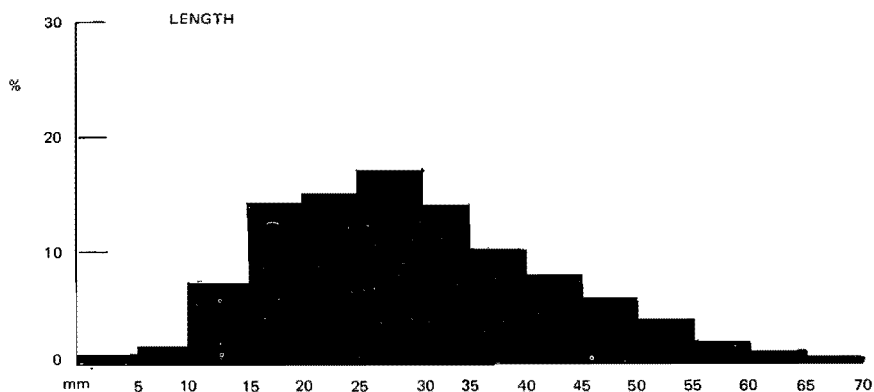


Fig. 1. Histograms showing distribution of dimensions of flakes and blades.

Rejuvenating Flakes

Removing all or some of bottom of platform	84
Removing considerable portion of side of core in addition	24

Struck Flakes and Blades

Total number of all waste flakes and blades	6793
Total number of measured flakes and blades	1921
Total number of measured flakes and blades with cortex	921

The measurements used for the histograms were taken from all unbroken pieces only. The quantity of broken flakes and blades present on the site seems remarkable. Many of the broken pieces are segments of blades which would appear of suitable dimensions for microlith production. There are in fact only 173 unbroken blades which measure 1 cm and under in width.

When assessing the waste material by means of the histograms the nature of the flint must constantly be borne in mind. There is a misleading abundance of erratic shapes which must have the effect of masking the intention of the worker.

Miscellaneous*MISCELLANEOUS PIECES SHOWING BOTH RETOUCH AND USE* Total—36

These include two rejuvenators. Their use is predominantly as scrapers or knives.

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES SHOWING USE

Total—196

CALCINED FLINTS

These occurred in fair numbers.

PEBBLE

One large flint pebble (brown)—5 cm × 10 cm × 2.5 cm appears to have been used as a hammerstone along half of one side. It is likely to have been derived locally from tertiary beds.

SANDSTONE

A piece of sandstone showing wear which would seem to indicate that it was used as a rubber. Its lack of iron content seems to indicate that it was not derived from the immediate locality.

FOSSIL

One fossil, found in loose association with the Mesolithic flint industry, is a sponge fossilised into chalcedony. It is c. 2 cm long, egg-shaped, and its natural canal has been fractured. It is not possible to establish whether this fracture was accidental or deliberate, but it has made the fossil into a natural bead and it could conceivably have been collected to be used as such.

Comparison of the Weston Wood Industry with those of Sites with Similar Typologies

(Since Retouched Microblades are a type unclassified in these sites, they have been omitted from this table.)

	Farnham	Horsham	Selmeston	Downton	Peace-Haven	Iwerne Minster	High Rocks	Weston Wood
Obliquely blunted points	% 41	35.8	53	52	59	72	25	49
Lanceolates	% 6.5	2.5	9.5	21.6	6	15.5	20.5	4
Needles	% 2.9	1	—	5.6	7.5	—	—	9
1 edge and across base	% 8.8	9.2	9	2.4	10.5	1.5	—	—
Triangles	% 25	11.9	8	3.2	4.8	3.9	37	30
Other geometrical	% 5.7	5.1	11	7.2	4.8	8.0	11	5
Points with inverse retouch at base	% 1.6	8.4	1.5	1.6	1.6	—	2.4	—
Hollow based points	% 5.9	23	6	0.8	3	3.9	4.5	—
Shouldered and tanged points	% 1.1	3.5	1.5	—	—	—	—	—
Chisel-ended arrowheads	% 1.3	—	—	5	—	—	—	3
Axes present	x	x	x	x	x	x	—	x
Burins present	x	x	x	x	—	—	x	x

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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(which did not include Weston Wood), from his unpublished thesis on British mesolithic industries, to Dr J. W. Cowie for his comments on the fossil and to Mr R. S. Barron for his comments on the flint and sandstone.

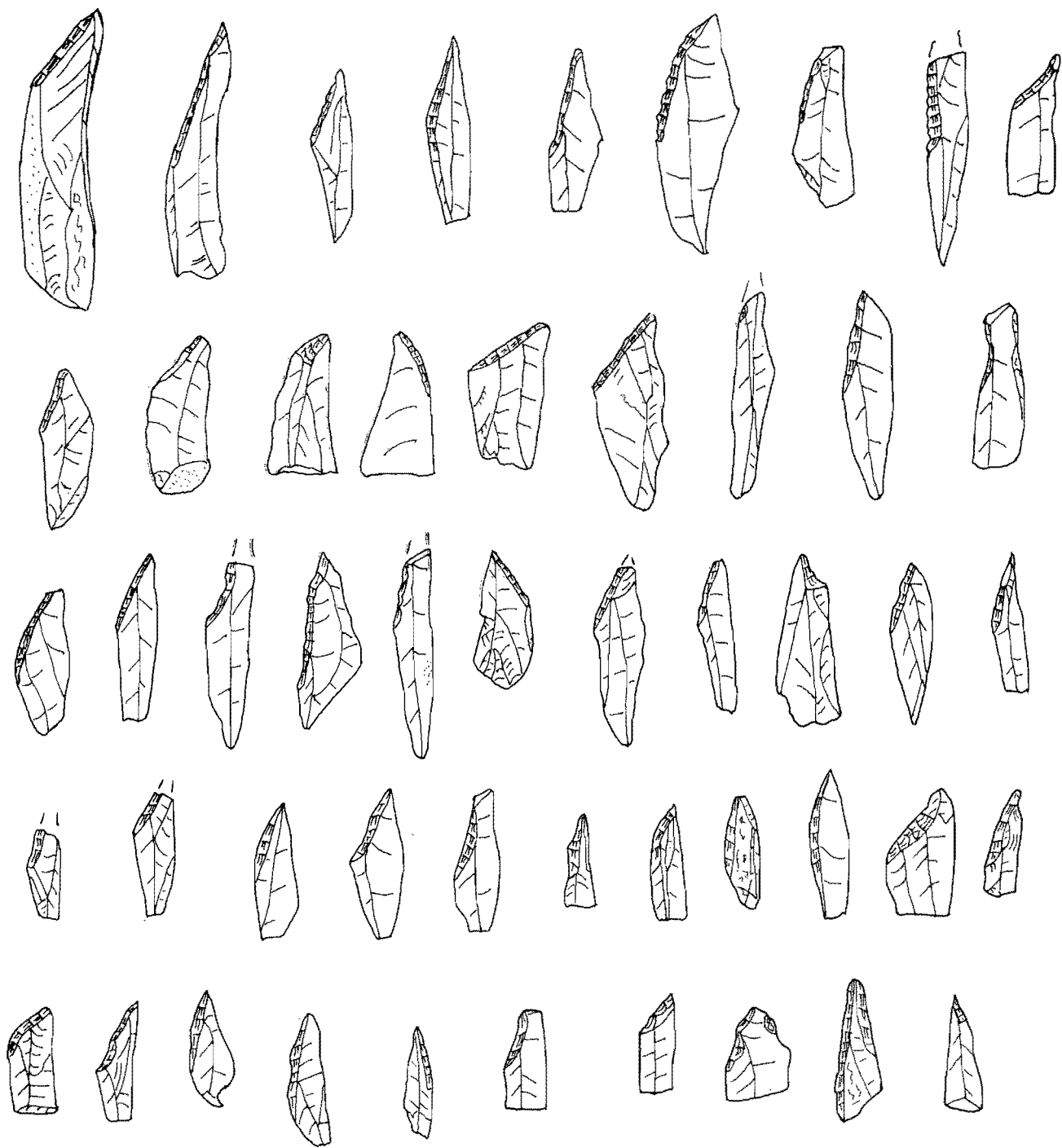
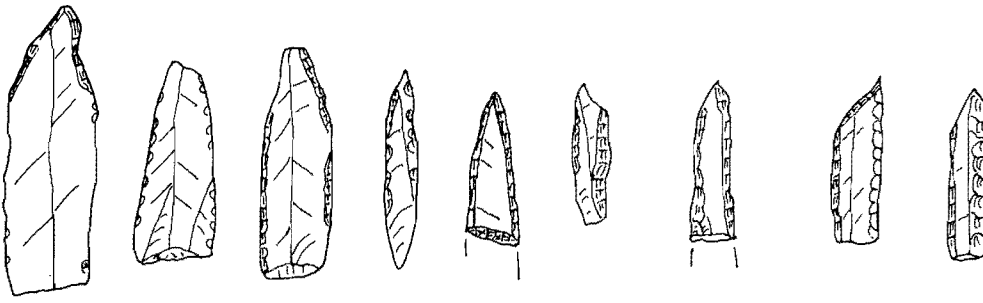
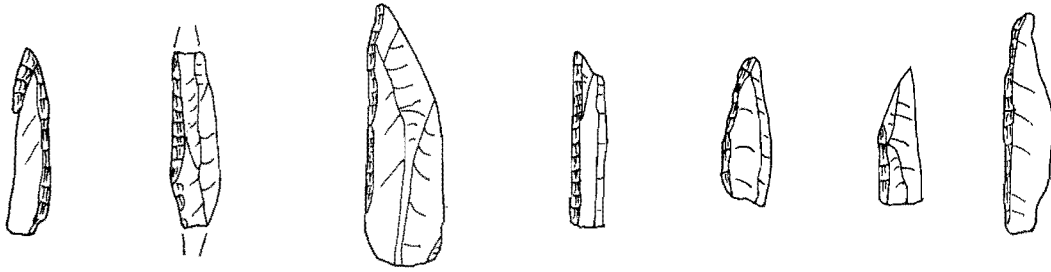


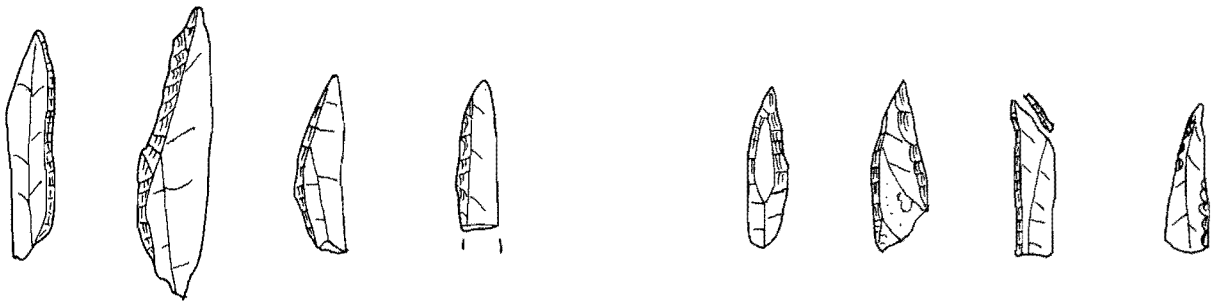
Fig. 2. Obliquely blunted points. Scale 1/1



Needles



Retouched microblades

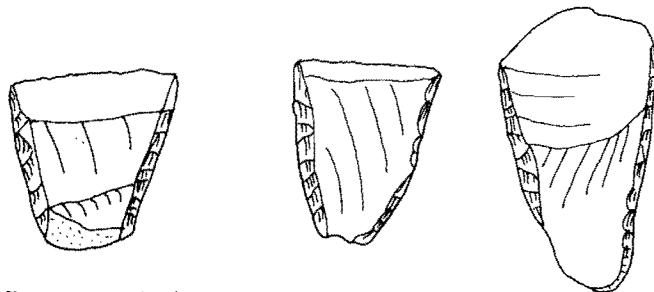


Lanceolates

Single points



Rhomboids



Transverse arrowheads

Fig. 3. Needles; retouched microblades; lanceolates; single points; rhomboids; transverse arrowheads. Scale 1/1

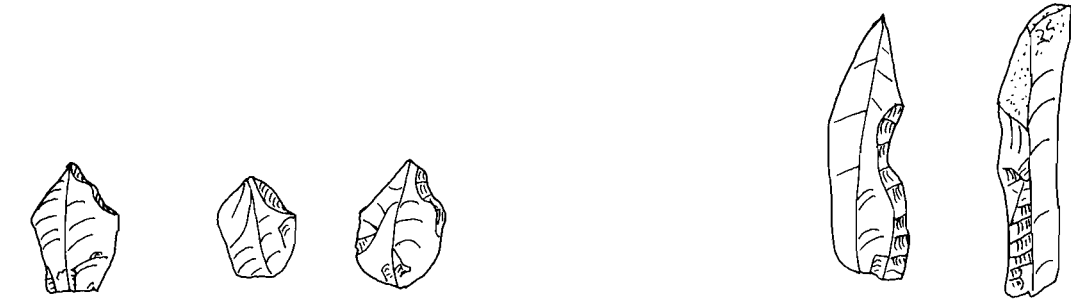


Triangles – scalene



Triangle – isosceles

Sub – triangle



Microburins

Blades notched for microburins

Fig. 4. Triangles; microburins; blades notched for microburins. Scale 1/1

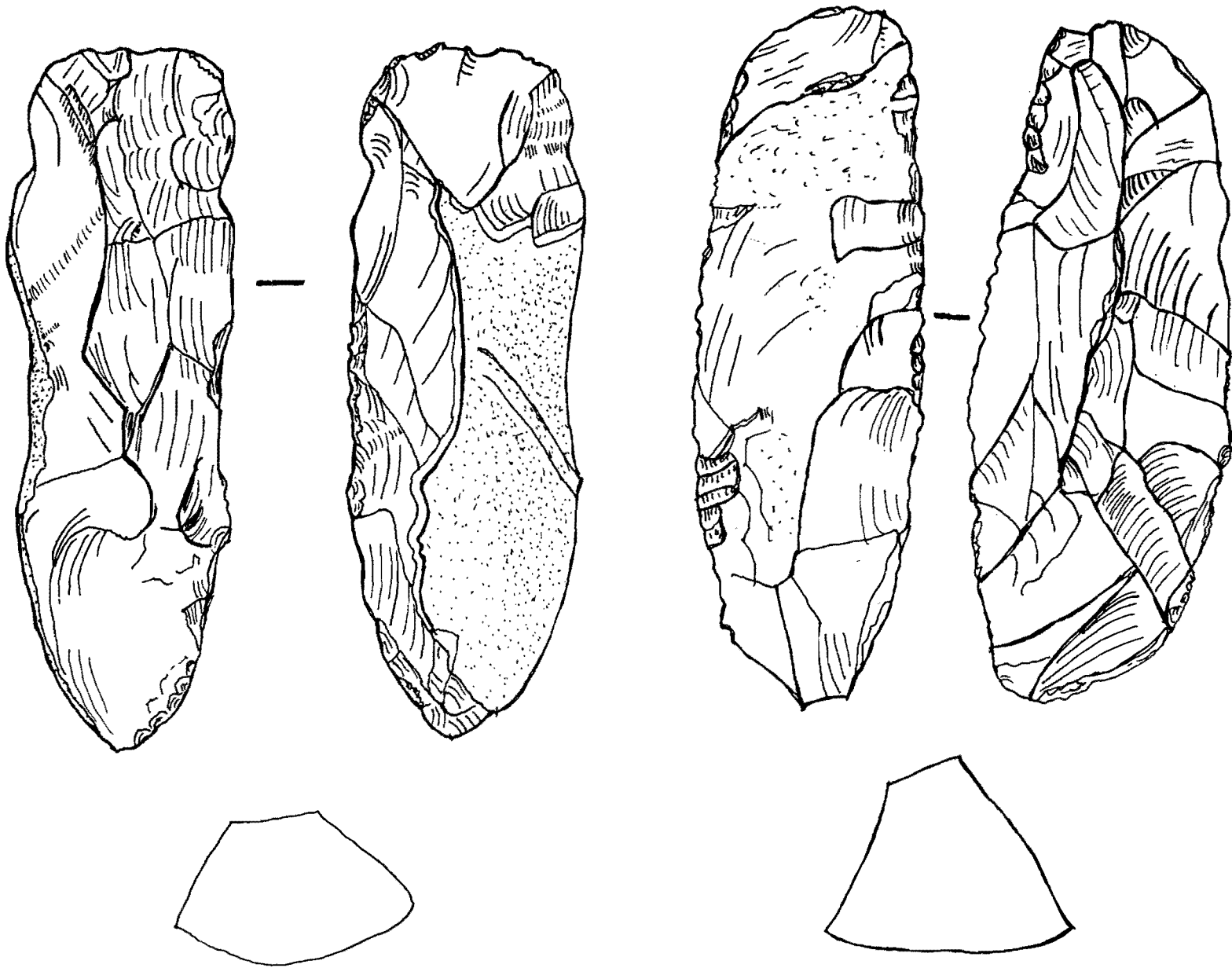


Fig. 5. Axes. Scale 1/1