

# Archaeological Reports and Notes

## A MESOLITHIC SITE IN SOUTH DERBYSHIRE.

By JOHN LOMAS

LITTLE has been published to date concerning the Mesolithic period in South Derbyshire; in fact it has been stated that there is an absence of Mesolithic material in the area.<sup>1</sup> It is therefore interesting to be able to report the finding of a concentration of worked flints of Mesolithic type in the parish of Melbourne.

The site is located on the south bank of the Trent (SK 408264) on level ground at the top of a steep slope rising about 150 ft. from the river which is about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile distant. The plough soil is sandy over red marl and is very different from the much heavier soil on the slope.

The flints, which are all surface finds, were sent together with some sherds of Iron Age pottery and part of a leaf-shaped Neolithic arrow-head from the same site to the British Museum. Since then Mr. T. G. Manby has made the following report.

### *Raw Material.*

Flint was the sole material used on this site. The bulk of it is a transparent brown flint, but dark brown and brown banded flint is also present. Many of the pieces have a thin blue-grey patination, though only one flake is completely patinated. Many of the pieces, especially the cores, retain patches of cortex, showing that pebbles were the source of supply. Only three pieces show fire-cracking.

### *Cores.*

All the cores are small in size, the largest weighing only 27 gms.

<sup>1</sup> D.A.J., LXXVI (1956), 14.

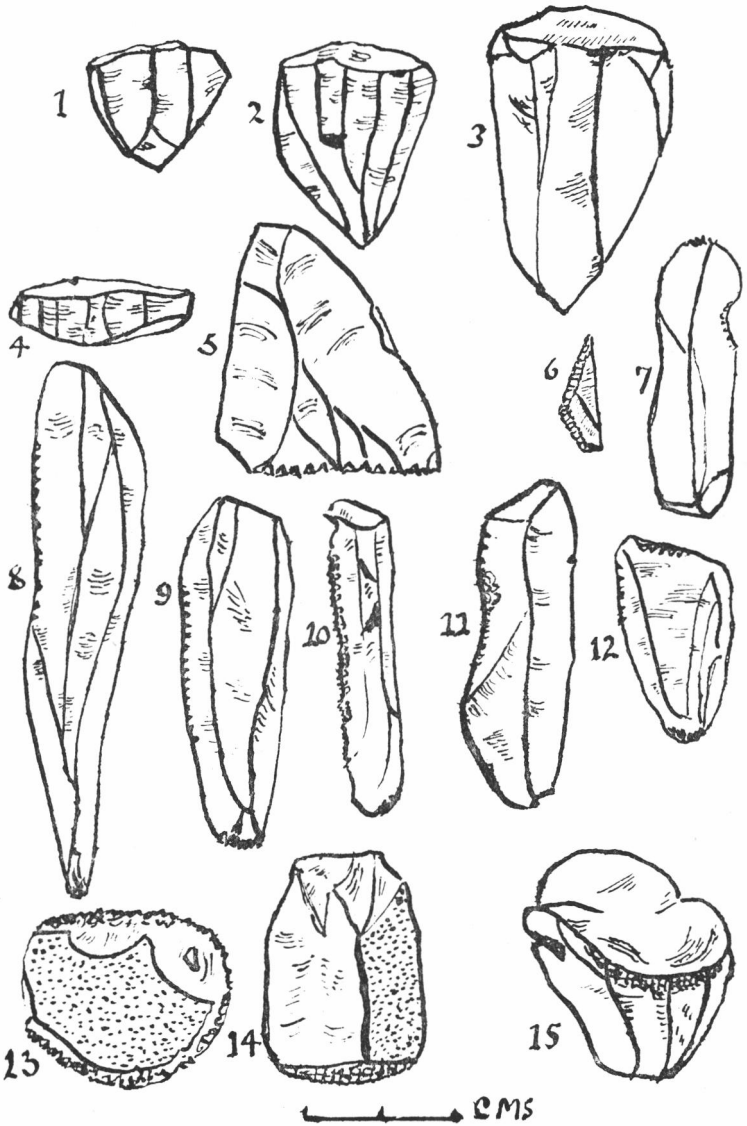


FIG. 16. Flints from Melbourne Mesolithic site.

Type.	Number.	Weight gms.	Converted to core scrapers.
a. Single platform, flakes struck all round perimeter.	3 (Fig. 16, 1-3)	3.5, 8, 8.5	—
b. Single platform, flakes from part of perimeter.	6 (Fig. 16, 5)	8.5 to 27	3
c. Two platforms, parallel.	1	15	—
d. Chopper.	1	8.5	—

There are five rejuvenation flakes and one basal disc (Fig. 16, 4).

#### *Flakes.*

Forty flakes of various sizes, some tending towards blades by their symmetry.

#### *Microliths.*

One, part of a triangle, possibly of isosceles form (Fig. 16, 6).

#### *Notched flakes.*

One blade has the beginning of a notch work above the bulb (Fig. 16, 7).

#### *Retouched flakes.*

Eight flakes have varying degrees of retouch along their edges; one is 7 cms. in length (Fig. 16, 8-12).

#### *Scrapers.*

A large and small disc scraper (Fig. 16, 13); one end scraper (Fig. 16, 14); two broad round-edged scrapers; two side scrapers; and an end scraper on a core rejuvenation flake are present.

One core scraper shows that an attempt has been made to improve the striking surface of a core by removing a basal disc, and that the result was a failure due to the irregular fracture surface left (Fig. 16, 15).

## COMMENTS.

This is undoubtedly a Mesolithic industry, but the rarity of microliths makes it difficult to assign the assemblage to any particular culture. However, taken as a whole, the assemblage is similar to the geometric group of the Southern Pennines, which along with the Shippea Hill material was considered by Clark to have affinities with the French Sauveterrian.<sup>2</sup>

The size of the residual flint cores is of some interest, even if this is conditioned by the size of the flint pebbles available. The cores range from 8 to 27 gms. One conical core is below this range and is only 3.5 gms. This compares well with the average range of cores associated with the geometric microlithic industries on the Pennines around Huddersfield.

The flints, which are the property of the landowner, Mr. John Gillies Shields, are in the keeping of the writer, who would like to take this opportunity of expressing his thanks to him and also to the occupier, Mr. R. H. Warren, for permission to search. Thanks are also due to the British Museum and to Mr. T. G. Manby for reports on the flints.

**MELANDRA CASTLE EXCAVATIONS, 1959.**

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By JAMES A. PETCH.

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I N 1959 work at Melandra Castle began on 22 August and continued until 6 September. Expenditure on tools and the hire of a hut, the latter generously provided at a nominal charge by Messrs. C. V. Armstrong of Broadbottom, was borne by the Excavations Subcommittee of the Manchester Branch of the Classical Association. A volunteer labour force, admirably organized by Mr. L. J. Webb of Broadbottom, carried through the work with enthusiasm. Permission was readily granted

<sup>2</sup> *Proc. Prehist. Soc.*, XXI (1955), 3-20. See also *Arch. News Letter*, VI, no. 3 (1956), 63