

ART. I. – *Prehistoric Habitation Sites in West Cumbria: Part I, The St. Bees Area and North to the Solway*. By J. CHERRY, B.Sc, AND P. J. CHERRY, B.A.

OUR search for evidence of the prehistoric habitation of West Cumbria, by walking over ploughed fields and examining erosion scars, is now ended. The survey was begun in 1959 and during the ensuing years until 1981 we searched the coastal strip between Whitehaven and Silecroft. Major sites at St. Bees,<sup>1</sup> Seascale,<sup>2</sup> Drigg<sup>3,4</sup> and Eskmeals<sup>5,6</sup> have been recorded and it is our intention to record all the sites and finds which we have discovered over the years, including the final totals and types of artefacts from the sites already reported. To a great extent the classification of flint artefacts is subjective and a re-examination of artefacts from reported sites has caused us to re-classify several items so that the individual totals might be slightly different, in one or two cases, from those already published. For convenience of reporting we have divided the survey into appropriate areas and this report will be considering the concentration of sites around St. Bees. This area has been further sub-divided into groups which are in fairly close proximity to each other and an analysis of the finds from each site is given in Table 1. For the purpose of this report the expression “chalk flint” will be used to describe flint which does not originate from beach pebbles or the glacial drift of West Cumbria, but has all the appearance of flint removed from its natural chalk matrix. This paper should be read in conjunction with our report of 1973, in which this flint was described as “black flint”.<sup>1</sup> A map of the sites is given in Fig. 1.

A. TARNFLAT AND FLESWICK

TARNFLAT HALL I Main Site

(Reported as Site A in 1973)

Map reference: 2946 5149 NX 91. Field No. 4882 NX 9414

Height OD: 69 metres.

No more artefacts have been found since 1973, but three bulbar rejects\* have been reclassified as microburins, Fig. 2, 14.

TARNFLAT HALL II

Map reference: 2947 5147 NX 91 Field No. 7475 NX 9414

Height OD: 70 metres.

A small concentration of flints occurred between the main site and Tarnflat Hall farm including two cores and one flake with some secondary retouch.

FLESWICK I Main Site

Map reference: 2945 5135 NX 91 Field No. 4256 NX 9413

Height OD: 53 metres.

Fields have been ploughed since 1973 on the south facing slopes of the North Head between St. Bees Lighthouse and Fleswick. The latter is a small bay between the North and South Heads, bounded by red sandstone cliffs which are broken by a narrow gully through which a small stream discharges over a pebble beach into the sea. Incorporated

\* This term refers to small bulbs which have been removed from blades by direct snapping, and not by the microburin technique.

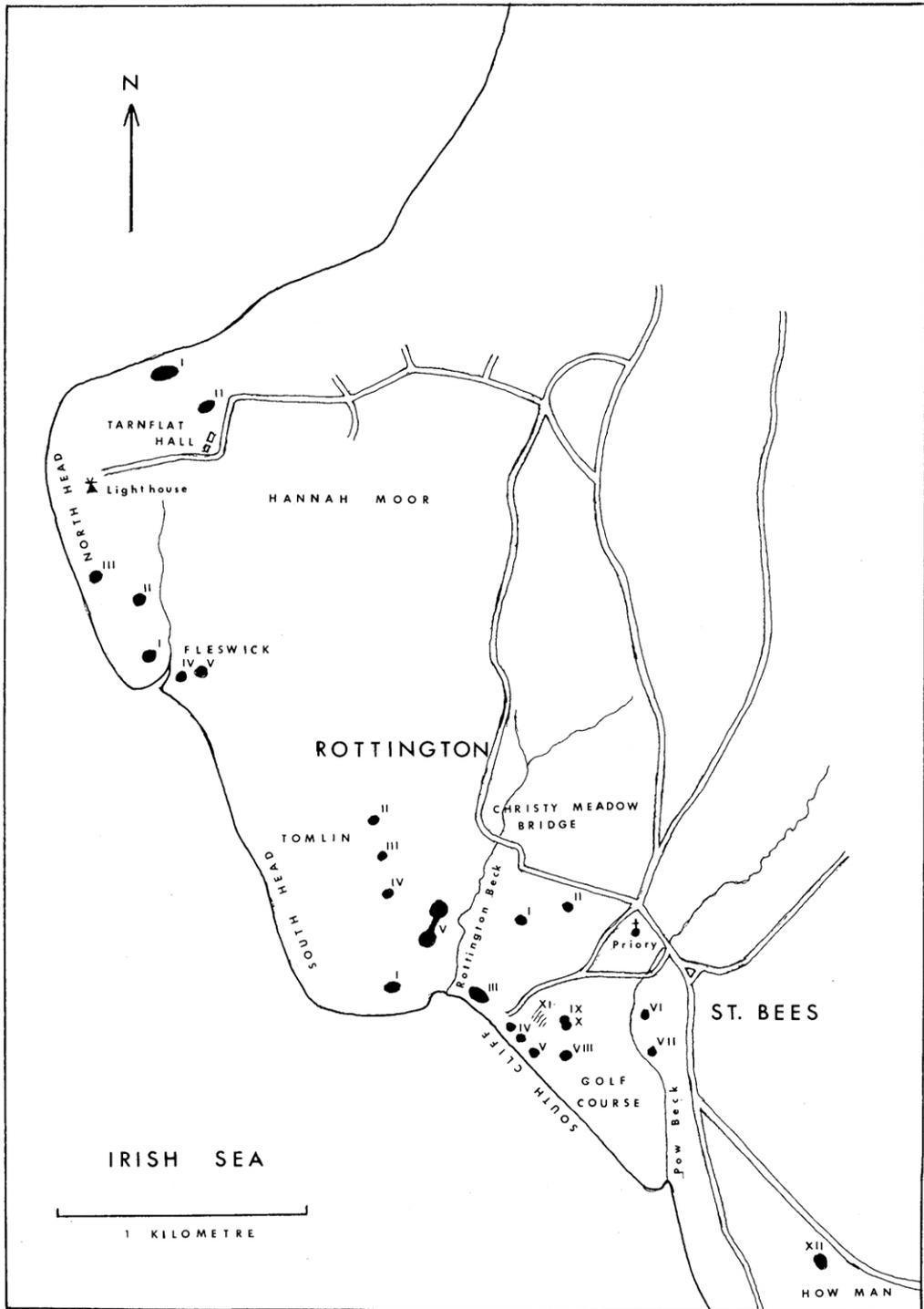


FIG. 1. - Map of sites in the St. Bees area.

in this beach is a considerable number of small flint pebbles. In the field bordering the gully to the north, which has easy access to the beach, we found a concentration of heavily patinated flints which have all the characteristics of a late Mesolithic flint industry, including small blades, microliths, microburins and narrow bladelet cores with well defined striking platforms, Fig. 2, 6-9, and 23. There is an unusually high proportion of scrapers in the assemblage, one of which is made from a core-front rejuvenation flake, Fig. 2, 19. Artefacts of volcanic tuff and chert were also found.

We were only able to search this field on two occasions; on our first visit the field was freshly ploughed and when we returned three days later it had been rolled and seeded, so that conditions were not conducive to finding small pieces of flint. This probably accounts for the fact that we found only three microliths.

#### FLESWICK II

Map reference: 2944 5138 NX 91 Field No. 4182 NX 9413  
Height OD: 60 metres.

In the adjoining field, about 300 metres to the north of Fleswick I, we picked up twenty-six flints, most of which are patinated and include two heavily patinated single platform cores together with a small retouched flake of honey coloured flint from which the bulb of percussion has been removed by blunting similar to the microburin technique. There is also an angular fragment of chalk flint.

#### FLESWICK III

Map reference: 2942 5139 NX 91 Field No. 1800 NX 9413  
Height OD: 75 metres.

A scatter of flints, mostly heavily patinated, was picked up about 500 metres north-west of Fleswick I and includes a microlith and a microburin. The flints here were not concentrated in a fairly small area as was the case at the other Fleswick sites.

#### FLESWICK IV

Map reference: 2946 5134 NX 91 Field No. 7035 NX 9413  
Height OD: 45 metres.

In wheel ruts on the south side of the gully, on a slope above the St. Bees to Fleswick footpath, we found a small quantity of flints, only half of which show any marked degree of patination. Among the collection are two utilised flakes, a scraper and two narrow bladed cores.

#### FLESWICK V

Map reference: 2947 5134 NX 91 Field No. 8439 NX 9413  
Height OD: 55 metres.

On an eroded hedge-bank about 100 metres east of Fleswick IV and higher up the hillside, we found a few lightly patinated flints and a struck flake of volcanic tuff.

## B. ROTTINGTON

### ROTTINGTON I South Head Footpath

Map reference: 2957 5118 NX 91  
Height OD: 35-40 metres.

Heavy pedestrian traffic from St. Bees to Fleswick has eroded the footpath on the South Head, exposing the boulder clay for widths of up to a metre in places. The path

from St. Bees is steep but at a height of about forty metres it turns in an east-west direction and becomes more level. We have picked up flints here, with Mesolithic characteristics, over a distance of about thirty metres, including single platform cores and small blades. Blades and flakes of volcanic tuff were also found.

When one considers the area of ground exposed, the total of more than two hundred and fifty artefacts found here suggests that there is much more material awaiting discovery.

It is worth noting that about 50 metres inland from the footpath site is a grass-covered heap of stones about 6 metres in diameter, on a slight eminence on the hillside.

#### ROTTINGTON II TOMLIN A

Map reference: 2956 5127 NX 91 Field No. 5858 NX 9512

Height OD: 60 metres.

About half way up the northern edge of this field we found a large fragment of chalk flint together with a scraper which seems to be of the same material. Neither shows any marked degree of patination.

#### ROTTINGTON III TOMLIN B

Map reference: 2956 5125 NX 91 Field No. 5858 NX 9512

Height OD: 55 metres.

At the southern edge of the field below Rottington II we found a small scatter of flints which are heavily patinated and Mesolithic in character.

#### ROTTINGTON IV TOMLIN C

Map reference: 2956 5123 NX 91 Field No. 6035 NX 9512

Height OD: 45 metres.

A small concentration of lightly patinated flints was found about 300 metres south of Rottington III. These are similar in many respects to the Bronze Age material found on numerous sites along the Cumbrian coastal strip.

#### ROTTINGTON V Main Site

Map reference: 2959 5121 NX 91 Field Nos. 8513 and 8831 NX 9512

Height OD: 15-22 metres.

Reploughing since 1973 has enabled us to carry out further searches of these fields and has increased the total of artefacts, especially from the northern edge of the site. The only finds of significance have been a small number of microburins, Fig. 2, 16, and a fragment of chalk flint together with a number of artefacts of volcanic tuff, Fig. 2, 20. At the south-west corner of the field we picked up twenty-five flint pebbles from which only one or two flakes have been struck, and a number of cores which do not have well defined striking platforms; there was very little knapping debris associated with this material, so that it would appear that this corner of the field was used to dispose of beach pebbles and cores which were unsuitable for the manufacture of tools.

### C. ST. BEES

#### ST. BEES I Scalebarrow

Map reference: 2963 5122 NX 91 Field No. 1222 NX 9612

Height OD: 25 metres.

In a ploughed field seven hundred metres south-south-west of Christy Meadow bridge we found a number of flint artefacts, including a crude *petit tranchet* derivative arrowhead

(J. G. D. Clark's classification C2)<sup>7</sup>, Fig. 2, 11, and two fragments of chalk flint. Both fragments are heavily abraded about their edges. Most of the artefacts exhibit only a light degree of patination and we think this material is the debris of a Bronze Age site.

ST. BEES II Abbey Farm

Map reference: 2965 5122 NX 91 Field No. 4400 NX 9612

Height OD: 35 metres.

In a field due west of Abbey Farm we picked up nine flints which were widely scattered, and included one core and a lightly patinated flake worked along one concave edge.

ST. BEES III Car Park

(Reported as Site C in 1973)

Map reference: 2961 5118 NX 91

Height OD: 15 metres.

The area of grass between the car park and the shore has now stabilised and there is nothing further to report from here.

ST. BEES IV SOUTH CLIFF A

(Reported as Site D in 1973)

Map reference: 2964 5115 NX 91

Height OD: 20-30 metres.

Further examination of the eroding cliff face has led us to the conclusion that there were two sites here, one at a height of about 20 metres OD and the other to the south-west at 30 metres OD.

Continuing erosion of the cliff has resulted in the discovery of more artefacts of volcanic tuff confirming that this was the principal material used on this site.

ST. BEES V SOUTH CLIFF B

Map reference: 2965 5114 NX 91

Height OD: 33 metres.

About 40 metres south-east of South Cliff A, from the same level below the top of the cliff, we extracted a blade and two struck flakes of volcanic tuff together with three small flakes of flint.

ST. BEES VI POW BECK A

(Reported as Site E in 1973)

Map reference: 2969 5117 NX 91 Field No. 8868 NX 9611

Height OD: 11 metres.

The area has stabilised since 1973 and no more artefacts have been found.

ST. BEES VII POW BECK B

Map reference: 2969 5115 NX 91 Field No. 8648 NX 9611

Height OD: 16 metres.

A small scatter of flints was found on the lower slopes of a ploughed field above Pow Beck, including two cores and a blade.

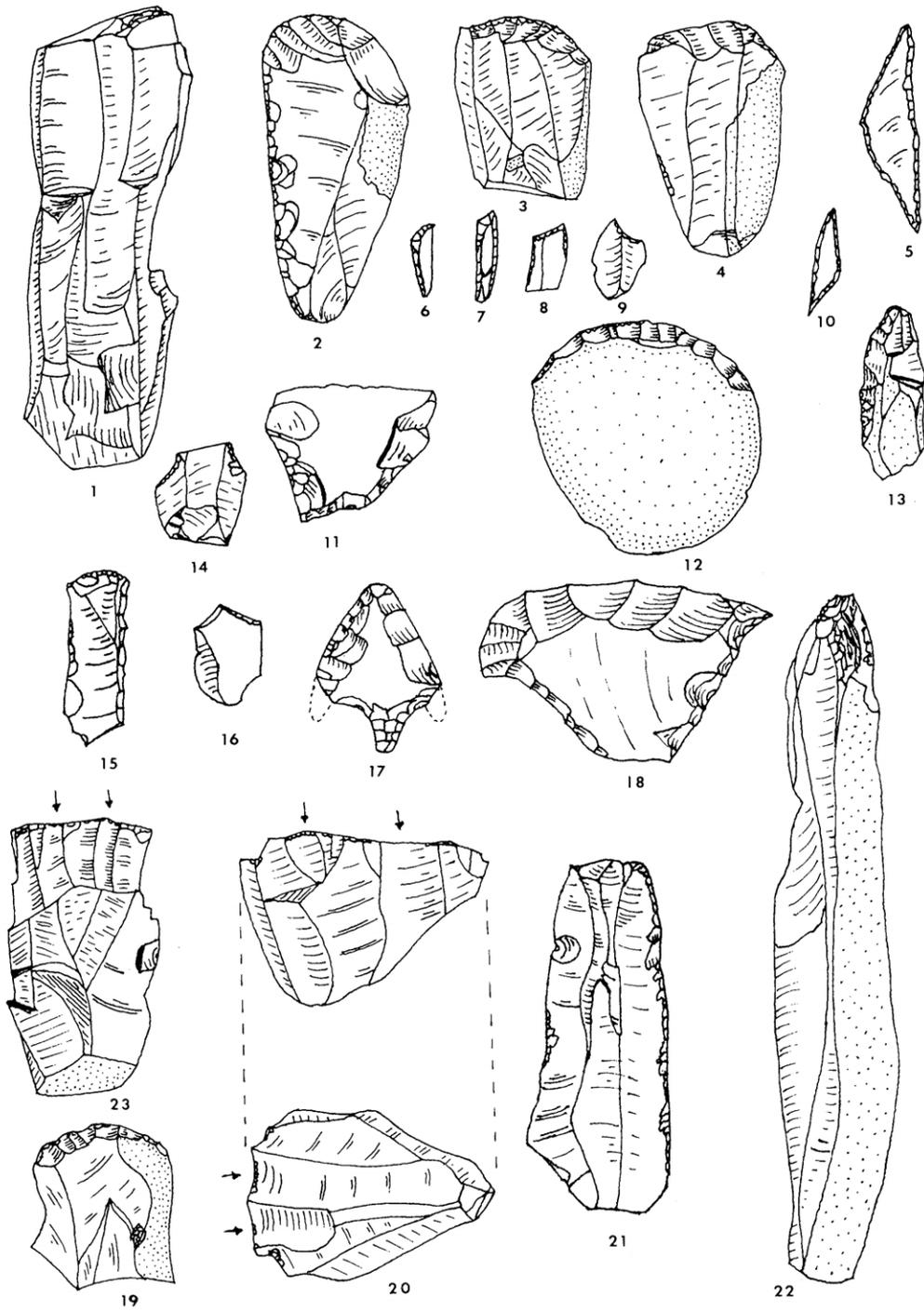


FIG. 2. - A selection of artefacts from the St. Bees area. All drawn to scale 1:1, except no. 10 which is 2:1.

## ST. BEES VIII GOLF-COURSE FIELD A

Map reference: 2965 5115 NX 91 Field No. 5262 NX 9611

Height OD: 10 metres.

This field adjoins St. Bees Golf-course and covers an area of more than twelve acres with a depression running across from south-east to north-west. The depression is bounded on the west by steeply rising ground at the back of the South Cliff, while to the east lies a saddle shaped hillock which occupies rather more than half of the field. At the southern end of the depression is a boggy hollow about fifteen metres in diameter. By comparison with the rest of the field, the soil here is very dark, and in the winter the hollow often fills with water. Extending from the hillock towards the hollow is a slightly raised tongue of drier ground, and on this, after ploughing, we found more than one hundred artefacts. All of these, with one exception, are made from chalk flint, and none of them exhibit any significant degree of patination.

The flint is generally dark grey with a thin white cortex, but in some of the cores and artefacts the grey colour shades to a creamy yellow. The cores are on average much larger than those from the pebble industries, their mean weight being 58 grammes which is almost three times the weight of the average of pebble cores from St. Bees, Fig. 2, 1. The scars on the cores indicate that these form part of the debris of a blade industry and the majority of the scrapers are made on the ends of thick blades, Fig. 2, 2-4 and 12. Apart from the retouched pieces, there is a high proportion of utilised blades and flakes, Fig. 2, 21-22.

A few yards up the cliff bank to the north-west we picked up a fine example of a *petit tranchet* derivative arrowhead (Clark's classification E),<sup>7</sup> Fig. 2, 18, which seems to be made from the same grey flint. This type is sometimes referred to as a "chisel"<sup>8</sup> and has not so far been found in datable circumstances after 1700 or 1800 b.c. The earliest date for this type is 2700 b.c. In the centre of the concentration we found a large triangular microlith of the creamy yellow colour, Fig. 2, 5, and a small blunted blade in yellow flint which exhibits traces of orange cortex, Fig. 2, 13. This blade is the only artefact found within the flint spread which appears to derive from pebble flint.

In 1976 the site was visited by Mr C. Bonsall of Edinburgh University, who is directing an excavation of Mesolithic sites around Williamson's Moss, Eskmeals. A series of sample excavations, each one metre square, was laid across the estimated centre of the site towards the boggy hollow, to confirm the extent of the site, the position of the greatest concentration of artefacts and to study soil conditions. A note by Mr Bonsall is given as an appendix to this paper.

## ST. BEES IX GOLF-COURSE FIELD B

Map reference: 2965 5117 NX 91 Field No. 5262 NX 9611

Height OD: 23 metres.

On the highest part of the saddle shaped hillock about one hundred and fifty metres north of Golf-course field A, we found a number of virtually unpatinated flints of Bronze Age character including a tanged and barbed arrowhead of the Sutton B type<sup>8</sup> with broken barbs, Fig. 2, 17. The general shape is typical of the arrowheads of the Bronze Age littoral industries of West Cumbria.

## ST. BEES X GOLF-COURSE FIELD C

Map reference: 2965 5117 NX 91 Field No. 5262 NX 9611

Height OD: 21.5 metres.

Overlapping the southern edge of Golf-course field B was a scatter of highly patinated flints which included artefacts of a late Mesolithic character, including microliths, Fig. 2, 10, microlith fragments, a battered back blade, Fig. 2, 15, bulbar rejects and narrow bladelet cores with well defined striking platforms. In addition we picked up a few artefacts of volcanic tuff, and one or two pieces of struck chalk flint which had almost certainly originated from Golf-course field A site. It was not considered practicable to attempt to separate the Bronze Age and Mesolithic waste material.

## ST. BEES XI GOLF-COURSE FIELD D

There was a light scatter of flints over much of the remainder of the field especially on the hillside behind the South Cliff, although these were too scattered to be identified as individual sites. The finds included a large fragment of chalk flint together with a flake of the same material, both of which are similar in appearance to the flint from Golf-course field A.

## ST. BEES XII How Man

Map reference: 2978 5105 NX 91 Field No. 7634 NX 9810

Height OD: 75 metres.

This small site lies about one kilometre to the south-east of St. Bees and 800 metres from the shore. The field slopes steeply to the west and the flints were found on a more level area towards the eastern end of the field. The material is mostly lightly patinated and contains a high proportion of utilised pieces.

### Miscellaneous Finds

(a) From the raised beach, which provided the gravel for the Roman road at Kirkbride, to the east of the fort, Mr R. Bellhouse handed to us a single platform core, a scraper, three flakes and a nondescript fragment of struck flint, none of which exhibits any marked degree of patination. In disturbed Roman levels in the fort excavation he also found a small patinated blade.

(b) In a ploughed field on the raised beach at Beckfoot (Map reference: 3088 5486 NY 14) we found a small number of flints with Bronze Age affinities, including two cores and two utilised flakes, together with six struck fragments of flint, all of which have only a slight degree of patination. Associated with these artefacts was a small struck flake of volcanic tuff.

(c) In a freshly ploughed field on the north-western edge of Tarns Dub (Map reference: 3114 5475 NY 14) we picked up a scraper together with a flake with secondary retouch along one edge and two utilised flakes, all made from lightly patinated grey flint. Associated with these was a struck flake of volcanic tuff.

(d) In an erosion scar on the boulder clay cliffs to the north of Maryport (Map reference: 3058 5389 NY 03) we found two flakes of struck grey flint. Subsequent ploughing of the field bordering the cliff did not produce any further finds.

(e) A blade, made from opaque yellow flint was found on a patch of bare ground adjacent to a newly erected bus shelter on the A595 at Hensingham (Map reference:

TABLE I. - Analysis of Artefacts

ARTEFACT	SITE																				PREHISTORIC HABITATION SITES: I, ST. BEES TO THE SOLWAY		
	Tarnflat		Fleswick					Rottington					St. Bees										
	I	II	I	II	III	IV	V	I	II	III	IV	V	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX & X	XI	XII
(a) Flint																							
Waste Flakes	361	3	513	32	23	11	7	188	—	9	28	6144	19	7	266	51	2	81	5	48	624	70	34
Burnt Waste	27	1	4	1	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	323	5	1	21	2	—	9	—	3	41	13	—
Cores	79	2	58	2	2	2	—	6	1	1	1	905	4	—	43	3	—	6	2	11	81	13	1
Struck Pebbles	41	—	19	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	477	—	—	17	—	—	1	—	—	30	—	5
Core Rejuvenations	3	—	2	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	23	2	—	4	1	1	1	—	9	9	—	—
Bulbar Rejects	7	—	17	3	—	—	—	16	—	—	—	160	1	—	49	3	—	9	—	1	23	—	—
Blades	32	—	33	—	—	1	—	20	—	—	—	372	2	—	32	10	—	4	1	10	46	—	—
Microliths	10	—	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	64	—	—	17	3	—	—	—	2	3	—	—
Microburins	2	—	4	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	21	—	—	5	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
Retouched/ Utilised Blades	7	—	9	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	1	88	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	16	17	—	—
Utilised Flakes	11	—	9	—	—	2	1	2	—	—	2	117	2	—	—	—	—	3	—	12	31	2	5
Miscellaneous Retouch	11	1	18	—	1	—	1	4	—	1	2	78	—	1	3	1	—	4	—	16	18	2	6
Scrapers	13	—	21	1	—	1	1	1	1	2	1	240	2	—	14	4	—	3	—	12	25	5	4
Knife Forms	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	1	—	43	3	—	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	—
Awls	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	3	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—
Arrowheads	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—
TOTAL	604	7	710	45	26	17	10	249	2	15	35	9059	42	9	476	78	3	121	8	141	952	110	55
Waste % Patinated	66	33	93	68	8	55	14	64	NIL	NIL	7	54	NIL	NIL	64	71	50	67	60	NIL	64	34	31
(b) Volcanic Tuff																							
Waste Flakes	7	1	9	—	—	—	1	5	—	—	1	120	1	—	40	52	2	1	—	—	3	—	—
Cores	3	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	23	—	—	1	1	—	1	—	—	1	—	—
Lumps	3	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	14	—	—	6	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Blades	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	40	—	—	16	27	1	1	—	—	5	—	—
Microliths	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	2	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bulbar Rejects	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	10	—	—	5	11	—	7	—	—	1	—	—
Scrapers	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	—	—	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Core Rejuvenations	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	1	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
"Pick"	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Retouched Flakes and Blades	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	16	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	16	1	10	1	0	0	1	7	0	0	1	234	1	0	73	101	3	11	0	0	10	1	0

2986 5161 NX 91). The blade is three centimetres long and one centimetre wide at its maximum with slight secondary retouch along its ventral surface.

(f) In Field No. 0642, east of Fleswick (Map reference: 2950 5134 NX 9413) we found a large sub-triangular flake of grey flint with some retouch along one edge, bordering on a hinge fracture.

(g) A thumb-nail scraper made from a grey flint pebble was picked up in a mole-hill on Hannah Moor in Field No. 9142 (Map reference: 2952 5142 NX 9414).

(h) A thumb-nail scraper made from a yellow flint pebble was found embedded in the footpath leading down the south side of the gully at Fleswick (Map reference: 2945 5134 NX 91).

(i) A small scraper made from yellow flint was found on the east side of Tomlin in Field No. 1700 (Map reference: 2952 5132 NX 9513). Although almost all the fields on Tomlin from St. Bees to Fleswick have been ploughed and searched, only two or three nondescript flakes of flint have been found. A search of fields between St. Bees and Whitehaven yielded only a few nondescript flakes of flint.

(j) In the fields below How Man we have found several flint flakes, the only artefact of significance being a large flake core of creamy yellow flint found in isolation (Map reference: 2973 5106 NX 91).

## Discussion

Since our report of 1973, reploughing of fields searched before that date and the ploughing of fields previously under grass has enabled us to obtain larger and more representative samples from the sites already reported, and has resulted in the discovery of more sites with Bronze Age, Neolithic and Mesolithic affinities. The flint scatters at Fleswick, South Head Footpath, South Cliff and the Golf-course Field contain artefacts of late Mesolithic character which are similar to those already reported from West Cumbria.

Although many of the fields in the coastal strip in the St. Bees area have been ploughed during the period of our survey, some fields to the south, including the old golf-course, have remained under grass. Examination of erosions in the old field banks in this area was unproductive. There is also a narrow strip of land bordering the sandstone cliff between St. Bees and Fleswick which was not ploughed, and by comparison with the Tarnflat and South Head Footpath sites, which lie close to the edge of the cliff, this strip could have had some attraction for mesolithic habitation; however, we found nothing in the cliff-top footpath or other small areas of erosion.

The use of the microburin technique, which we had previously thought to be absent from the St. Bees sites, has now been confirmed in the Tarnflat I, Fleswick I, Rottington V, St. Bees III and St. Bees X assemblages. This method was not used on a large scale and appears to have been applied only to broad or thick blades from which the bulb of percussion could not have been easily removed by direct snapping.

The total number of artefacts made from volcanic tuff has increased considerably since 1973, due to some extent to our improved ability to recognise this material amongst the field debris, and we are now able to report the finding of a microlith of volcanic tuff at Rottington V.

It is worth noting that the commonest tuff artefact is the blade and this occurs most

frequently on sites where blades also form a high proportion of the flint assemblage, emphasising the contemporary use of these materials in the blade industries at St. Bees. Newly discovered sites in the Orton and Crosby Ravensworth districts of Cumbria<sup>9</sup> have yielded a quantity of flakes of volcanic tuff, some of which exhibited traces of polished curved surfaces suggesting that they had originated during the reworking of polished stone axes. There was no evidence of polishing on any of the tuff artefacts from St. Bees.

Further comment on the Mesolithic industries at St. Bees will await the outcome of the extensive and detailed study of the Mesolithic sites at Eskmeals being undertaken by Mr C. Bonsall.

Firm evidence from the flint collection for primary Neolithic occupation at St. Bees is not strong and is mainly to be seen in the assemblage from the southern end of Rottington V, although only one leaf arrowhead was found there and this is of the kite form, which is thought to be a late type. A polished stone axe is recorded as being found "halfway between Whiteflatt farm and Fleswick".<sup>10</sup> However, there is no farm of this name, but there is a field on Hannah Moor between Sandwith and Fleswick which is called "Whiteflatts" and is part of High House Farm, Sandwith. A small polished stone axe was found at Barrowmouth, Whitehaven, and another of almost identical size is reported as "north of St. Bees Head", and may be a second reporting of the Barrowmouth axe.<sup>11</sup>

The most interesting development of our search has been the discovery, in a small area in the Golf-course Field (St. Bees VIII) of the industry based on chalk flint. This material and fragments of similar material found in various fields at St. Bees are virtually free from patination. Some of these unpatinated fragments were found in the same soil conditions as heavily patinated flints which had late Mesolithic characteristics, although the main chalk flint assemblage lay in soil with a higher humus content which might have retarded the onset of patination.

All the pieces found outside the Golf-course Field seem to be abraded or to have been struck more or less randomly, and do not exhibit prepared striking platforms or blade scars, so that it would seem unlikely that they originate from the industry in the Golf-course Field. The large core found below How Man is more akin to the Bronze Age cores of the pebble industries of the sandhills. It is difficult to explain the presence of chalk flint fragments at St. Bees, but it is possible that some of them have been brought to the field from farm middens. We have picked up a number of gun flints in the fields and it has been suggested that these could have been manufactured locally using imported flint nodules. A large piece of chalk flint, similarly abraded and struck, was found at Harrington and is at present in Whitehaven Museum.

It can be argued that the sites in the sandhills and others found adjacent to the shore, are the remains of temporary camps which were occupied seasonally for very short periods, and which were used principally for the purpose of manufacturing tools from flint pebbles found on the beach. This reasoning cannot be applied to a site based on chalk flint which would have to be imported to the area. The high proportion of utilised blades and flakes in addition to the tools with secondary retouch would suggest an occupation of several weeks. If the site had been occupied for an extended period it could be assumed that some use would have been made of beach pebbles to eke out the supply of good quality flint.

Typologically, this material can be ascribed to a Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age culture, although it bears little comparison with the coastal poverty industries of the

Bronze Age, being more akin to the coastal Neolithic in its emphasis on the production of blades. There is little doubt that the microlith and the *petit tranchet* derivative arrow-head are made from the same flint source as the remainder of the assemblage. The microlith is the largest found on any of the West Cumbrian sites, is only slightly patinated, and is in the form of an isosceles triangle; most of the microliths made from volcanic tuff, but only two made from flint, are similar in size. The latter were found within a few feet of each other on Rottington V.

This is the first flint industry based entirely on chalk flint found so far in the north-west coastal region, where all the sites previously reported have been poverty industries based entirely on beach pebbles. The source of the flint is not known, and it is suggested that it could have been brought by sea from Ireland. Connections between Cumbria and Ireland in the Bronze Age have been demonstrated.<sup>12</sup> However, it seems likely that the flint was brought from Yorkshire over the Pennines, probably via the Eden Valley, since this appears to be the likeliest route used by the Beaker migrants.<sup>13,14</sup> Evidence has been recorded of a farming episode in the coastal region at about 2000 b.c. at Drigg, fourteen kilometres south-east of St. Bees.<sup>15</sup>

Other evidence for connections between Yorkshire and Cumbria during the first quarter of the second millenium B.C. can be seen in the jet ornaments found at Woodhead near Bewcastle; Broomrigg near Ainstable; Dale Moor, Crosby Ravensworth; and Moor Divock, Askham,<sup>16,17</sup> while jet disc beads were found associated with a Food Vessel burial at Mecklin Park, Santon Bridge. The latter are now deposited at the Carlisle Museum and Art Gallery, Tullie House, Carlisle.

In all, we have recorded twenty four sites around St. Bees, together with a number of finds of single artefacts; the totals of flints from each site vary widely from seven at Tarnflat I to more than nine thousand at Rottington V, with its supply of fresh water from Rottington Beck, shelter from the north and easy access to the beach. The greatest use of the area was by people following a hunting and food gathering tradition and although there is evidence of Neolithic occupation it was not until the Early Bronze Age that significant habitation re-occurred.

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## APPENDIX

### *Trial Excavation at St. Bees Site VIII (Golf-Course Field)*

By Clive Bonsall.

Since 1974 the present writer has been involved in a programme of excavation on Mesolithic sites at Eskmeals in South-west Cumbria (Bonsall 1981).<sup>1</sup> During the 1976 season, at Mr Cherry's invitation, the opportunity was taken to carry out a small exploratory excavation at the Golf-course field (Site VIII) at St. Bees, in an effort to learn more about the flint industry<sup>2</sup> and its archaeological context. The site was of particular interest because of its location on the edge of a boggy area offering the possibility, however slight, of the preservation of some organic material. It had also yielded the only substantial assemblage manufactured from good quality imported flint in an area where beach pebbles were the principal source of raw material for prehistoric flint industries.

The aims of the excavation were: (1) to define more precisely the density and horizontal extent of the flint scatter; (2) to obtain a larger and more representative sample of the flint industry, which might provide a clearer indication of the date of occupation; (3) to obtain information about the stratigraphy; and (4) to determine the degree of preservation and the extent of post-occupation disturbance of the site. Test pits, each one metre square, were set out several metres apart in a line across the area in which the surface collection had been made. The individual squares were excavated in shallow spits to a depth of 30 cm, and the contents of each spit were sieved through a mesh size of 3 mm.

The partial soil profile exposed by the excavation consisted of:—

<i>centimetres</i>	
0-3	Turf
3-21	Dark brown humus-rich soil. At 15 cm a turf line created by recent ploughing
21-24	Grey silty horizon
24-	Grey-brown silty clay

The upper part of the profile clearly showed the effects of cultivation, and no trace of a buried land surface could be detected. The artefacts occurred throughout the A-horizon with a marked fall-off at about 20 cm, although occasional pieces were recovered from below this level.

In archaeological terms, the results were somewhat disappointing. The four squares excavated produced a total of only 31 worked flints. There were no finished tools. All the pieces recovered fall into the category of débitage products; although a proportion of the flakes and blades have small amounts of retouch or edge damage that could have resulted from use. The richest square produced only 18 pieces, while one square failed to yield a single artefact. These figures have to

be compared with those for the Mesolithic sites at Eskmeals where totals of between 50-500 flints per square metre are commonly recorded for the main occupation areas. No other archaeological material was recovered during the excavation, and there were no traces of hearths or structures which might be associated with the flint industry.

The excavation failed to produce any clear indication of the age or nature of the prehistoric occupation. There had evidently been some post-depositional disturbance mainly due to cultivation, while slope movements could have been a contributory factor. The recovery of so few artefacts might indicate a fairly brief episode of occupation. On the other hand, such a limited excavation may simply have failed to locate the main artefact concentration. Nor can one discount the possibility of the existence elsewhere on the site of a buried land surface with archaeological material in a sealed context. It is hoped that an opportunity will arise in the future to carry out more extensive work on the site in order to test this possibility, and to try to resolve some of the outstanding problems.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> The Mesolithic sites at Eskmeals were discovered by J. and P. J Cherry, and the excavations at Monk Moors and Williamson's Moss have been carried out in collaboration with them.
- <sup>2</sup> This term is applied in the context of the fine series of end-scrapers, blades and blade cores collected from the site (Fig. 2).

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