

ART. I. – *Prehistoric Habitation Sites in West Cumbria: Part IV, The Eskmeals Area.*

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THE results of our archaeological survey between St. Bees and Ravenglass have already been published in the *Transactions* of this Society.¹ This paper extends the record to include the area inland from Tarn Bay, bounded by the river Esk to the north, Langley Park and Middleton Place to the east, with Stub Place and The Nook to the south. A map of the area is given in Fig. 1. Some of the sites have already been reported in earlier papers and passing reference only will be made to these, in order to record any later discoveries, so that this paper should be read in conjunction with the earlier reports.²

The term “chalk flint” is used to describe flint which does not derive from beach pebbles or the glacial drift of West Cumbria, but which has all the appearance of flint removed from its natural chalk matrix. The term “bulbar reject” refers to bulbs of percussion which have been removed from flint or stone blades by direct snapping and not by the microburin technique. Unless otherwise indicated all map references are taken from O.S. Sheet SD 09.

To the west of the road which runs from north to south along the eastern boundary of the Ministry of Defence Proof and Experimental Establishment is a series of raised beach gravels, largely overlain by wind-blown sand. To the east of the road are fields which lie just below the eight metre contour, and several acres of boggy scrub shown on early O.S. maps as “Williamsons Moss”. Beyond the fields and bog, the ground rises up a raised terrace of clay which represents the eroded remains of an old shore-line that can easily be traced from Skelda Hill in the south to Langley Park in the north.

To the east of Williamsons Moss the ground slopes gradually upwards for about four hundred metres to a gently rounded ridge, before falling rather more steeply towards a sluggish stream known as Eskmeals Pool. The stream runs northwards past the farms of Langley and Langley Park before discharging its water into the river Esk at Newbiggin.

Tables 1 and 2 give the totals and types of lithic artefacts from all the sites discovered inland from the sand-dunes, including an updating of the totals from the sites reported in 1969.³

THE SAND DUNES

*Site numbers are as used in the 1963 report.*⁴

II. Map reference: 3079 4938

Towards the centre of the flint scatter, on the top of a “full” of the raised beach we noticed a large flat pebble of sandstone, about twenty-five centimetres in diameter, around the edge of which was a narrow band of finely divided charcoal. Beneath the pebble was a mixture of sand and small granules of charcoal to a maximum depth of three centimetres. A similar hearth, covered by a flat sandstone pebble was found in the sand-dunes at Drigg, in association with a scatter of flints.⁵ About fifty metres to the west of the “full”, almost at the edge of the flint scatter was an “anvil stone” made from

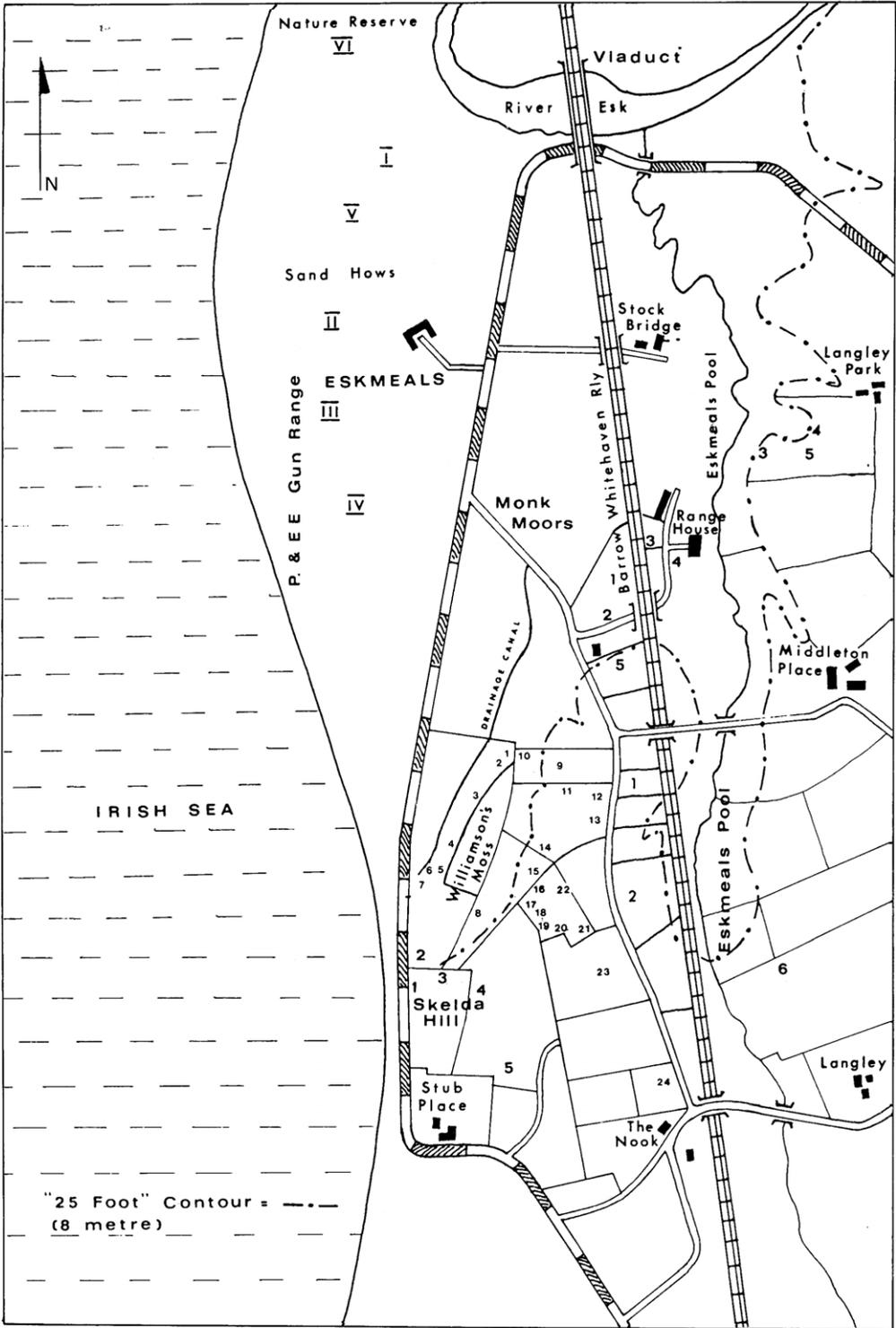


FIG. 1. - Sketch map of the Eskmeals area showing the sites with mesolithic affinities clustered around Williamson's Moss and along the eight metre contour.

a large pebble of hard red sandstone, with an indentation pecked into each face. (Plate 1). Pebbles with hollows in each face have previously been reported from Eskmeals sand-dunes, to the north of Site II, by M. C. Fair,⁶ although the depressions are more symmetrical and seem to have been ground rather than roughly pecked. Smaller "anvil stones" made from pebbles have been found at Seascale and Silecroft associated with Bronze Age and Late Neolithic artefacts.⁷

In 1963 we reported the finding of a blue glass bead made in three segments, which Dr D. B. Harden considered to be of Iron Age date.⁸ A single segment of a blue glass bead has since been found, of similar diameter but of a slightly different shade of blue, which appears to be a fragment from a second bead.

Since our discovery of a large quantity of mediaeval potsherds on Site II we have found the site of a mediaeval pottery kiln at Muckleground on the east bank of Whitrowbeck.⁹ (Map reference: 3107 4938 SD 10). Although all evidence of the position of the kiln itself has been obliterated, fragments of fritted clay lining from the kiln were found in the beck. A large quantity of sherds of green-glazed, brown-glazed and unglazed ware, including wasters, which have been tentatively dated to the thirteenth century by Mr B. J. N. Edwards, was found on the bank. It was also possible to identify the position of the clay store in the form of an area of washed, lighter coloured clay, about three metres to the north of the position that we consider the kiln to have occupied. Little is known about the development of pottery manufacture in isolated communities and this type of pottery might have continued to be produced beyond the thirteenth century in West Cumbria. It is our view that this kiln was the source of the pottery found on the sand-dunes at Eskmeals. An archaeometric survey of the site has been carried out on behalf of the Cumbria and Lancashire Archaeological Unit which might enable the position of the kiln to be more accurately determined and also confirm the period of its use.

VI. Map reference: 3081 4950

Fifty metres to the east of the findspot of the saddle-quern and rubber, reported in 1963, movement of the sand by the wind revealed an area of charcoal impregnated sand about three metres in diameter and several centimetres deep. Around this on the uncontaminated sand were a number of cores and flakes of yellow pebble flint. The cores were crudely struck and were of the form which we have come to associate with the Bronze Age poverty industries of West Cumbria.

Most of the sites which we recorded in 1963 within the boundaries of the Proof and Experimental Establishment, have been planted with marram grass and buckthorn and are no longer visible.

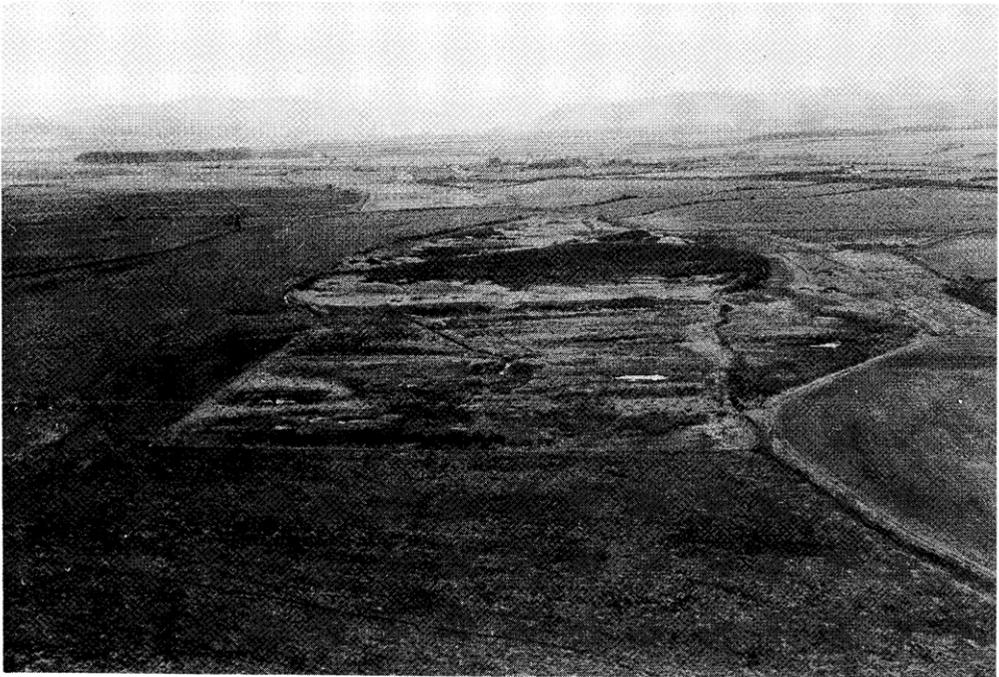
WILLIAMSONS MOSS

Since 1969 the fields to the west of Williamsons Moss have been ploughed and a hedge grubbed out to make one long field stretching beyond the ends of the Moss. The reploughing has enabled us to pick up more artefacts and to identify more closely the different centres of flint knapping activity. Ploughing of fields to the east and north of the Moss, some of which have not previously been ploughed within living memory, has



PLATE 1. - "Anvil stone" from Eskmeals sand-dunes site II showing the pecked indentation in the face of the sandstone pebble.

PLATE 2. - Williamsons Moss looking north. The hedge-banks to the north-east clearly show the position of the old eroded shore-line.



resulted in the discovery of many more flint knapping sites. We have therefore amended the site numbers given in the 1969 paper in order to assist us in the compilation of this report. The areas shown on the 1969 map are given, in this paper, in parenthesis after the map reference. A view of Williamsons Moss, looking north, is given in Plate 2.

WILLIAMSONS MOSS 1. Map reference: 3085 4919 (Area 1) Height O.D.: 7 metres

On the highest part of the gravelly soil beyond the northern end of Williamsons Moss we identified a separate scatter of flints most of which are virtually unpatinated. These include scrapers, knife-forms, awls and a fabricator. Among the scrapers are four made from discarded cores by retouching the edge of the striking platform; this technique has been noted on other coastal late Neolithic/early Bronze Age sites which are based on beach pebbles and classified as poverty industries.¹⁰

WILLIAMSONS MOSS 2. Map reference: 3084 4919 (Area 1). Height O.D.: 7 metres

As we searched south of Site 1 the flints became scarcer and the degree of patination of most of the finds was noticeably greater, until about fifty metres south of Site 1 we came across a concentration of flints most of which are heavily patinated and late Mesolithic in character. These include bladelet cores, small blades and microliths together with three microburins. Towards the southern edge of the flint scatter we picked up a quantity of fragments of volcanic tuff, including cores, blades and a microlith. In the ploughed ground between Sites 1 and 2 we reported a fragment of grit tempered pot in 1969.

WILLIAMSONS MOSS 3. Map reference: 3084 4918 (Area 1). Height O.D.: 6.5 metres

About sixty metres south of Site 2 and closer to the field bank bordering the Moss we found a scatter of mainly lightly patinated flints, including scrapers, knife-forms, blades, an awl, a bifacially worked shouldered point, Fig. 2, 35 and a leaf arrowhead, Fig. 2, 31. One of the scrapers, Fig. 2, 34, is unusually large for a poverty industry and together with the leaf arrowhead is made from speckled grey flint. The field bank is constructed from earth and cobbles and this was heavily eroded by sheep after the field had been grassed. In the erosion scars and in the cattle tracks close by we have picked up more than three hundred flints. Erection of a barbed wire fence has since prevented further encroachment by the sheep and erosion has now ceased. We cut a small trial trench, within the bog, close by the findspot of the leaf arrowhead; this demonstrated that the flint scatter extends down the slope at the edge of the Moss, lying on a narrow organic band, which in turn overlies the beach gravel.

WILLIAMSONS MOSS 4. Map reference: 3083 4917 (Area 2). Height O.D.: 6.5 metres

Finds reported from here in 1969 included a fragment of thick heavily grit tempered pot, charcoal and a hollow-based arrowhead. Later finds include a large *petit tranchet* derivative arrowhead of the chisel type, Class B in J. G. D. Clark's classification, Fig. 2, 30.¹¹ This arrowhead has a notch worked into one side and would appear to be

unfinished. It is made from grey speckled flint and is larger than would be expected if it were made from a beach pebble; it is likely that it was made from chalk flint.

WILLIAMSONS MOSS 5. Map reference: 3083 4916 (Area 2). Height O.D.: 6.5 metres

Above the south-west end of the Moss we found nothing more of significance but would like to record that the few microliths that we found here were, in general, only lightly patinated.

WILLIAMSONS MOSS 6. Map reference: 3082 4917 (Area 2). Height O.D.: 4.5 metres

Down the west side of the gravel ridge towards the large drainage channel which runs north/south across the field, we found a number of unpatinated, crudely struck pebble flints and flakes together with three fragments of burnt tanged and barbed arrowheads.

WILLIAMSONS MOSS 7. Map reference: 3082 4916 (Area 2). Height O.D.: 6.5 metres

This sandy area to the south-west of the main flint scatter of Site 5 yielded nothing significant after reploughing except the tip of an oblique type *petit tranchet* derivative arrowhead, which is fire damaged. Artefacts of volcanic tuff, mainly in the form of waste flakes and fragments were found on all the sites except 6 and 7. Only one fragment of tuff shows any signs of a polished surface. A few chert cores, blades and a worked point were also found.

WILLIAMSONS MOSS 8. Map reference: 3083 4915 (Area 3). Height O.D.: 7 metres

This field has not been ploughed since 1969 but in an erosion scar on the field bank bordering the south-east corner of the Moss we found a small roughout axe of Borrowdale Series volcanic tuff and it is worth noting that the final assemblage from this site also includes twenty-one flakes and a scraper, all of volcanic tuff.¹²

WILLIAMSONS MOSS 9. Map reference: 3088 4919 (Area 6). Height O.D.: 12 metres

The flints were scattered along a narrow band about seventy metres long at the top of the clay bank which is the weathered remains of the old shoreline. Among the finds are microliths, cores, blades, scrapers and a microburin, all of which are heavily patinated. At the south-east edge of the flint scatter we picked up a fabricator made from lightly patinated translucent brown chalk flint, Fig. 2, 29. The assemblage also includes a core and flakes of volcanic tuff together with a core rejuvenation flake and a few flakes of chert.

WILLIAMSONS MOSS 10. Map reference: 3087 4919 (Area 6). Height O.D.: 7.5 metres

Just within the field gate below Site 9 we found a number of flints when the field was ploughed, and more have turned up since, near the gateway where the ground has been well trodden by cows. The finds include a microlith, scrapers and cores, although only

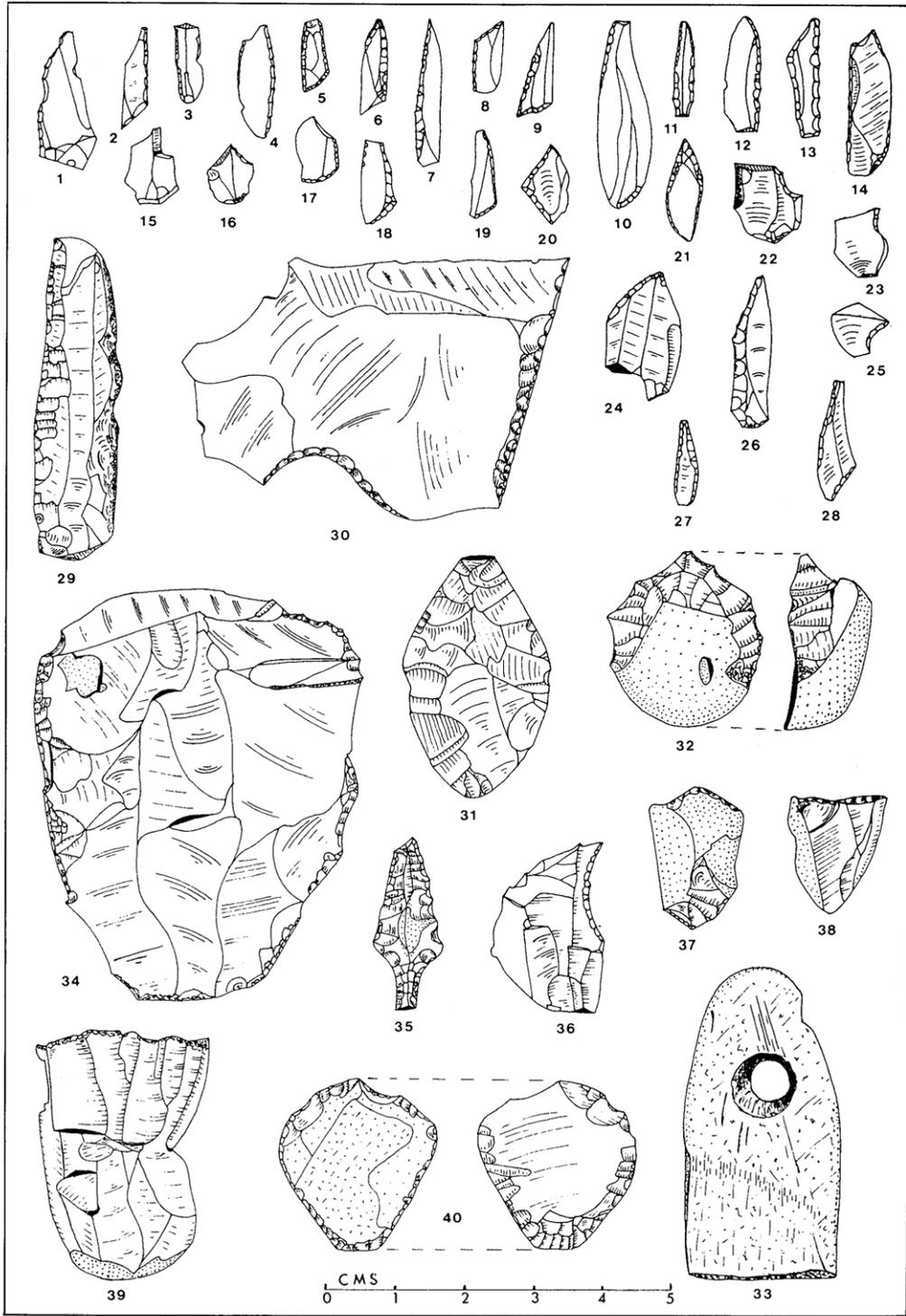


FIG. 2. - A selection of lithic artefacts from Eskmeals area.

a small proportion of the flints are heavily patinated. Most of the material from here is post-Mesolithic and probably includes material from Site 1, which lies beyond the gate to the north-west.

WILLIAMSONS MOSS 11. Map reference: 3088 4918. Height O.D.: 10.5 metres

Adjoining Site 9 is a field which slopes towards the south-west, on the upper slopes of which was a scatter of heavily patinated flints, including microliths, Fig. 2, 2 and 3, bladelet cores, blades, scrapers, a microburin, Fig. 2, 15, and obliquely blunted bladeliike flakes, Fig. 2, 1, in association with fragments of volcanic tuff and chert. This is possibly an extension of Site 10; the continuity of the flint spread having been broken by the removal of soil to construct the turf and cobble field bank.

WILLIAMSONS MOSS 12. Map reference: 3088 4918. Height O.D.: 10 metres

Fifty metres east of Site 11 was a diffuse scatter of flints, several of which are worked and include an obliquely blunted flake similar to those found on Site 11. Again we found a few artefacts of volcanic tuff and one of chert.

WILLIAMSONS MOSS 13. Map reference: 3087 4918. Height O.D.: 8.5 metres

On a slight bank at the south-east end of the field below Site 12 was a scatter of flints contained within a somewhat smaller area than the latter, including cores, scrapers, blunted blades and obliquely blunted flakes. Among the waste flakes were several which showed signs of utilization in the form of edge damage. Although we found no microliths on Sites 12 and 13 the material was generally similar to that from Site 11 and was patinated to a similar extent.

WILLIAMSONS MOSS 14. Map reference: 3086 4917. Height O.D.: 7.5 metres

At the bottom of the field, near the north-east edge of the Moss, the loamy soil gives way to a mixture of sand and gravel which is the remains of an old beach deposit. On the highest part of this was a scatter of flints confined within a small area. Here we picked up cores, blades, microliths, core trimming flakes, obliquely blunted flakes, utilized pieces and a microburin, together with one flake of volcanic tuff. Most of the material found here can be ascribed to a late Mesolithic industry, with the possible exception of a bifacially worked tool in slightly patinated yellow flint, Fig. 2, 40.

WILLIAMSONS MOSS 15. Map reference: 3085 4917. Height O.D.: 7.5 metres

About ninety metres south-west of Site 14 on a slight knoll, near the north-east edge of Williamsons Moss, we reported in 1969 the finding of microliths and bladelet cores in molehills. This area is at present the subject of a detailed study by Mr J. C. Bonsall of Edinburgh University, and his excavations have shown that the flint scatter extended beneath the field bank at the eastern edge of the site.¹³ The field beyond the bank was

ploughed in 1978 and we were able to ascertain the full extent of the eastward scatter of the flints. A detailed search of the whole field revealed a number of small flint scatters.

WILLIAMSONS MOSS 16. Map reference: 3085 4916. Height O.D.: 10 metres

Forty metres south of Site 15 we found a scatter of highly patinated flints on a north-facing bank, including cores, Fig. 2, 39, blades, scrapers, utilised flakes and a microlith.

WILLIAMSONS MOSS 17. Map reference: 3085 4915. Height O.D.: 11.5 metres

Thirty metres south-west of Site 16 a few flints were scattered near to the edge of the clay bank above the Moss, all of which are heavily patinated except for a scraper made from yellow flint.

WILLIAMSONS MOSS 18. Map reference: 3086 4915. Height O.D.: 11.5 metres

South-east of Site 17 on more level ground bordering a slight depression which runs down the field in a north-westerly direction, we found a quantity of heavily patinated flints with late Mesolithic characteristics, together with a small blade of volcanic tuff. The artefacts were concentrated mainly in an area of about fifty square metres.

WILLIAMSONS MOSS 19. Map reference: 3086 4915. Height O.D.: 12 metres

Thirty metres south of Site 18 we picked up more than one hundred flints confined within an area similar to Site 18, about sixty square metres. The finds include scrapers, blades, bladelet cores and a microlith. The flints are heavily patinated and represent the debris of a small late Mesolithic flint industry.

WILLIAMSONS MOSS 20. Map reference: 3086 4916. Height O.D.: 11.5 metres

Fifty metres east of Site 19 we found a scatter of flints including a microlith, together with a small retouched blade of volcanic tuff.

WILLIAMSONS MOSS 21. Map reference: 3087 4916. Height O.D.: 11.5 metres

About sixty metres east of Site 20, not far from the eastern corner of the field we found a few more flints, including three cores.

WILLIAMSONS MOSS 22. Map reference: 3086 4917. Height O.D.: 9 metres

On a slightly sloping bank between Sites 15 and 21 was a small concentration of flints, a significant proportion of which were only slightly patinated. The assemblage includes a microlith, Fig. 2, 4, cores and three flints which appear to have been edge-damaged in antiquity.

WILLIAMSONS MOSS 23. Map reference: 3088 4914. Height O.D.: 14 metres

About four hundred metres south-east of Site 15 we picked up a number of flints, more than half of which are patinated, near the foot of an electricity pylon. This assemblage includes a higher proportion than usual of utilised flakes and does not appear to have the strong Mesolithic characteristics of the sites closer to Williamsons Moss.

WILLIAMSONS MOSS 24. Map reference: 3091 4909. Height O.D.: 17 metres

In a field which had been ridged for potatoes and which could only be searched with some difficulty, we found a scatter of lightly patinated flints, including two utilized flakes and five scrapers. This assemblage is different from the sites east of Williamsons Moss and undoubtedly represents a late Neolithic or Bronze Age occupation.

SKELDA HILL

SKELDA HILL 1. Map reference: 3082 4912 (Area 4). Height O.D.: 17 metres

The fields on Skelda Hill have been ploughed since 1969, enabling us to add to the collection of flints which we had earlier obtained from molehills and erosion. From the highest point of the hill above the road, the field slopes down towards the south, with the road below to the west. There was a scatter of heavily patinated flints, including blades, bladelet cores, microburins, Fig. 2, 16 and microliths, Fig. 2, 5 and 17 down the upper slopes along the west side of the field. There was no well defined centre of concentration.

SKELDA HILL 2. Map reference: 3081 4912. Height O.D.: 14 metres

A small field was ploughed on the steeper northern slopes of Skelda Hill above an old clay-quarry. Unfortunately the field had been rolled and seeded before we were able to make our search, so that the conditions were far from favourable. However, we found a small quantity of heavily patinated flint, including a microlith, a battered back blade and a damaged end-scraper.

SKELDA HILL 3. Map reference: 3082 4912 (Area 4). Height O.D.: 16 metres

About thirty metres east of Site 1, just below the field gate we found a small concentration of patinated flints with late Mesolithic affinities including microliths, Fig. 2, 6 and 18, blades and bladelet cores. The finds were mainly concentrated within an area of about fifty square metres.

SKELDA HILL 4. Map reference: 3082 4910. Height O.D.: 10-14 metres

Down the eastern slope of Skelda Hill, in the field adjacent to Site 3, was a diffuse scatter of flints, the majority of which are only lightly patinated. The finds include two scrapers and several fire-damaged pieces.

SKELDA HILL 5. Map reference: 3083 4909. Height O.D.: 8.5 metres

Below Skelda Hill to the south-east we found a few flints in a field which had been ploughed, rolled and seeded. The flints, which were confined to an area of less than fifty square metres, include a single platform core and a notched blade. All the flints are heavily patinated.

MONK MOORS

About six hundred and fifty metres north-east of Williamsons Moss is a small triangular field adjacent to the Barrow-Whitehaven railway, and bounded on the south by a road to Range House. The field is on a clay bank which slopes down to the west towards a flat area of sand and gravel stretching out towards the sand-dunes and the sea; drainage channels in the fields here show a peaty layer beneath the gravel. This area is shown on the O.S. map as "Monk Moors". The clay bank is the eroded remains of the old shore-line.

MONK MOORS 1. Map reference: 3089 4925. Height O.D.: 10 metres

On the south facing slope of the field near to the railway embankment we picked up more than two thousand flints, with late Mesolithic affinities, a high proportion of which are patinated. These include microliths, microburins, bulbar rejects, bladelet cores and scrapers. Among the microliths are obliquely blunted points, battered back blades, rods, scalene triangles and quadrangular forms. Flints were found in quantity right up to the edge of the ploughed land close to the railway embankment. A few artefacts of volcanic tuff and chert were also found.

MONK MOORS 2. Map reference: 3089 4924. Height O.D.: 8.5 metres

Lower down the field to the south of Monk Moors 1 and separated from it by a depression which runs across the field from east to west, was another heavy concentration of flints with similar characteristics. No artefacts were found in the depression between the flint scatters so that there was no overlapping of the sites. Here also we found several fragments of volcanic tuff, including one flake from which the original flake scars had been partially removed by polishing on a slightly convex surface. As the flints here were picked up right to the fence bordering the road at the southern edge of the field we excavated two trial trenches, each half a metre square on a small patch of open land to the south side of the road. In both cases several patinated flints were found, indicating that Monk Moors 2 originally extended well beyond the field to the south.

Excavation of the sites at Monk Moors began in 1974, under the direction of Dr P. Mellars and Mr J. C. Bonsall and a final report is in preparation.

MONK MOORS 3. Map reference: 3090 4926. Height O.D.: 12.5 metres

East of the railway and north-east of Site 1 we picked up a number of flints, mostly patinated, close to the most southerly edge of the field. These include microliths, blades

and bladelet cores, and probably represent the northern edge of Site 1. At the far end of the field and in the garden of a cottage belonging to the Proof and Experimental Establishment, were a few more flints with similar characteristics.

MONK MOOR 4. Map reference: 3090 4925. Height O.D.: 11.5 metres

Fifty metres south of Site 3, a small area of land adjoining the grounds of Range House was ploughed and a band of mainly patinated flints, including cores, blades, scrapers and a microburin was found along its western side. Also picked up was a blade in dark grey chert. This site is due east of Site 1 and is separated from it by the railway and as with Site 3 could indicate the limit of the spread of flints from Site 1.

MONK MOORS 5. Map reference: 3089 4923. Height O.D.: 10.5 metres

Along the top of a bank in a field adjacent to the railway one hundred metres south of Site 1 we found a scatter of flints, the majority of which are highly patinated and include a microlith and a high proportion of edge-damaged or utilized flakes together with two flakes of volcanic tuff and two flakes of struck chert.

Towards the bottom of the bank is a small field, about the same height O.D. as Site 2, where excavation of a trial trench of half metre square, yielded a microlith and several flakes of patinated flint.

An access road runs from Monk Moors southwards over the higher ground towards The Nook farm. At the eastern edge of a small triangular field below the road, south-west of Site 2 and just below the eight metre contour, we picked up a few flints. These were all close to the field bank and did not extend westward into the field. Between this field and Williamsons Moss, to the south, is a large field which slopes towards the west and through the middle of which runs the eight metre contour. This area looks as though it would have been suitable for prehistoric habitation but it has not been ploughed at any time during the past twenty-four years. However some field drains were inserted at the southern end and several flakes of yellow beach pebble flint were found which were similar to material from Williamsons Moss Site 1, which is about thirty metres to the west.

ESKMEALS POOL

From Monk Moors the farm access road to The Nook passes along most of the highest ground of the low ridge four hundred metres or so to the east of Williamsons Moss. Two fields bordering the road were ploughed before 1969 and the more northerly of these fields has been reploughed, enabling more flints to be found. The scatters in both fields were on the landward edge of the level ground which falls away eastward towards Eskmeals Pool.

ESKMEALS POOL 1. Map reference: 3089 4919 (Area 5). Height O.D.: 15 metres

The flints from here were scattered over a fairly wide area, possibly due to hedge-grubbing having taken place at some time in the past. The majority of flints are heavily

patinated and include cores, blades, retouched pieces, a few scrapers and a microlith, Fig. 2, 7.

ESKMEALS POOL 2. Map reference: 3088 4916 (Area 5). Height O.D.: 14 metres

This site is far more compact than Site 1; all the flints were confined within an area of about one hundred square metres with the majority lying in an area of about sixty square metres. This field has not been ploughed since 1969 so that there is nothing further to report.

ESKMEALS POOL 3. Map reference: 3093 4928. Height O.D.: 8 metres

Three hundred and seventy metres west-south-west of the farm at Langley Park on the edge of a bank above Eskmeals Pool which is considered to be a continuation of the eroded shore line, we found a heavy surface concentration of flints, the majority of which are heavily patinated and include microliths, Fig. 2, 8 to 14 and 19 to 21, microburins, Fig. 2, 22, 23 and 25, blades, knives, scrapers, Fig. 2, 32 and 37, concave scrapers, Fig. 2, 36, awls and obliquely blunted flakes, Fig. 2, 38, bulbar rejects and bladelet cores. One of the few pieces which are only lightly patinated is a blade struck from chalk flint. Two trial trenches half metre square outside the field showed that although the heaviest concentration was within the field, the scatter extended down the upper slope of the bank towards Eskmeals Pool.

About twenty metres south of the main scatter of flints we picked up a small fragment of schist with an hour-glass perforation at one end, Fig. 2, 33. A similar perforated stone was found at St. Bees and we think it is a broken whetstone.¹⁴

ESKMEALS POOL 4. Map reference: 3094 4929. Height O.D.: 8.5 metres

Between Site 3 and Langley Park farm is an electricity pylon near to the foot of which was a smaller scatter of flints, including microliths, Fig. 2, 26, 28, and obliquely blunted flakes, Fig. 2, 24, similar in characteristics to those from Site 3 which lay about a hundred metres to the south-west. Towards the eastern edge of the scatter the percentage of lightly patinated flints was noticeably higher and it is possible that there were two overlapping occupation areas of different periods here.

ESKMEALS POOL 5. Map reference: 3094 4928. Height O.D.: 8.5 metres

About fifty metres east of Site 3 is a slight depression in the field where the soil was slightly darker and contained more humus. On the western edge of this was a scatter of flints without any well defined centre of concentration, which contains a higher proportion of lightly patinated material than was found on Site 3. The finds include microliths, Fig. 2, 27, cores, blades, awls and a scraper.

ESKMEALS POOL 6. Map reference: 3094 4913. Height O.D.: 9 metres

Three hundred metres north-west of Langley farm and about eighty metres east of

Eskmeals Pool we found a small scatter of artefacts including a knife-form in patinated flint with steep blunting, a blade and a flake of volcanic tuff. The remainder of the fields on the east side of Eskmeals Pool northward to Langley Park farm were not ploughed but from the general configuration of all the sites it is likely that more artefacts could be expected on and above the eight metre contour in this area.

Discussion

The overall picture at Eskmeals, generally, is of a group of late Mesolithic habitation sites clustered above and along the eight metre contour, with later Neolithic and Bronze Age occupation at a slightly lower level on the raised beach gravels. Before the build-up of gravels, the shore-line seems to have been protected in some way from the effects of high energy waves, possibly by a weak clay ridge or a gravel bank further from the shore than the present-day beach. A sedimentary deposit found in the intertidal zone at the south-west end of the Proof and Experimental Establishment was examined by Dr M. J. Tooley and dated to about 7160 BP.¹⁵ This deposit appears to have been laid down under brackish water conditions and suggests that the area, at that time, was estuarine in character.

Williamsons Moss appears to have been formed later as a result of the modification of estuarine conditions and the build up of gravels following the inundation of the coast by the sea. This led, in turn, to the formation of a fresh water pond on the landward side of the gravels, which was subsequently filled up by deposits of sand and more humus. The pollens of this detritus mud were examined by Professor Pennington Tutin who noted indications of local Mesolithic activity followed by a decline in elm pollen and the local clearance of oak.¹⁶ It was concluded that the pollen analysis supported the view expressed in 1969 that the earliest occupation around Williamsons Moss occurred between 3500 and 2700 b.c.¹⁷

The excavations at Monk Moors (Sites 1 and 2) produced only limited results since the ground had been greatly disturbed by draining and repeated ploughing which had penetrated the boulder clay sub-stratum over most of the excavated area. The close proximity of the railway embankment presented a further complication since this appeared to overlie the eastern side of the site. Some of the limitations of the evidence obtained from Monk Moors are discussed by Mr J. C. Bonsall in his paper on the Coastal Mesolithic of north-west England.¹⁸

There has been much less intensive agricultural activity at Williamsons Moss (Site 15) and the railway is five-hundred metres to the east so that it is hoped that sufficient organic material will have been preserved to advance our knowledge of the late Mesolithic occupation of north-west England and give more substance to the bare bones of this report.

The finds recorded in this paper will be deposited in Carlisle Museum and Art Gallery.

References

- ¹ J. & P. J. Cherry, "Prehistoric habitation sites in West Cumbria. Parts I-III", CW2, lxxxiii, lxxxiv, lxxxv.
- ² J. Cherry, "Eskmeals sand-dunes occupation sites. Phase I, flint working", CW2, lxiii, 31; J. Cherry, "Early Neolithic sites at Eskmeals", CW2, lxix, 40.

- ³ J. Cherry, CW2, lxix, 40.
- ⁴ J. Cherry, CW2, lxiii, 31.
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TABLE I.

SITE	WILLIAMSONS MOSS																		
	SITE NUMBER	1-6	7	8	9-10	11	12	13	14	15 ^(g)	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
<i>Flint</i>																			
Waste flakes	7664	112	723	1309	442	129	93	484	218	43	7	67	71	43	12	21	80	13	
Burnt Waste	416	13	48	19	7	1	—	4	7	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cores	637	7	87	281	56	22	14	42	12	9	1	15	22	13	3	7	12	—	—
Struck pebbles	213	6	19	20	17	13	5	22	5	5	1	3	1	2	—	—	5	—	—
Core rejuvenations	41	1	14	15	3	1	—	5	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	3	—	—
Bulbar rejects	193	—	16	15	6	—	4	13	9	1	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Blades	340	3	51	29	47	9	9	37	10	6	—	4	8	6	—	2	2	—	—
Microliths	52	—	3	7	7	—	—	8	13	1	—	—	1	1	—	1	—	—	—
Microburins	3	—	—	1	2	—	—	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Retouched/Utilized blades	70	—	11	24 ^(d)	8	1	2	8	2	—	—	—	3	4	—	—	—	—	—
Utilized flakes	130	3	27	14	7	1	8	8	5	3	—	4	—	1	1	3	9	2	—
Miscellaneous retouch	57	—	—	13	7	1	2	2	4	—	—	—	3	1	—	1	—	—	—
Scrapers	177	—	24	17	11	1	5	10	—	2	1	5	3	1	—	2	5	5	—
Core Scrapers	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Concave scrapers	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Knife forms	29	—	—	—	—	1	1	3	—	2	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Fabricators	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Awls ^(a)	18	1	—	4	6	1	2	7	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Arrowheads	10 ^(b)	1 ^(c)	1 ^(c)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	10060	147	1024	1769	626	181	145	657	286	72	10	107	113	72	16	38	117	20	—
Waste % patinated	44	11	41	85	85	78	85	88	93	93	100	93	94	95	92	71	71	23	—
<i>Volcanic tuff</i>																			
Waste flakes	45	1	21	12	2	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Cores	3	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lumps	33 ^(d)	—	—	2	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Blades	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Microliths	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bulbar rejects	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Scrapers	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Core rejuvenations	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Axe roughouts	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Retouched flakes and blades	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	97	1	23	15	2	3	NIL	1	NIL	1	NIL	1	NIL	1	NIL	NIL	NIL	1	NIL

a – includes obliquely blunted flakes

b – 2 leaf, 2 *petit tranchet* derivative, 4 tanged and barbed,
1 hollow-based and 1 triangularc – *petit tranchet* derivative

d – includes one lump with convex polished surface

e – tanged and barbed

f – includes end scraper

g – provisional classification of surface finds only

TABLE 2.

SITE	MONK MOORS					ESKMEALS POOL						SKELDA HILL					
	SITE NUMBER	1 ^(b)	2 ^(b)	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Flint</i>																	
Waste flakes	1665	1187	310	112	272	66	233	3073	446	203	4	421	5	111	21	5	
Burnt waste	81	67	7	5	—	4	10	76	12	9	—	8	—	5	4	3	
Cores	116	111	23	3	46	14	43	335	57	31	—	69	—	18	5	1	
Struck pebbles	42	16	17	15	11	10	13	133	41	18	—	17	—	2	1	—	
Core rejuvenations	^(c)	7	1	2	1	—	1	50	8	2	—	7	—	2	—	—	
Bulbar rejects	206	89	7	6	6	1	5	143	20	9	—	6	—	5	—	—	
Blades	209	115	25	13	9	2	13	180	59	19	1	39	—	12	—	—	
Microoliths	60	35	4	—	1	1	—	78	13	4	—	4	1	5	—	—	
Microburins	20	9	—	1	—	—	—	17	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	
Retouched/Utilized blades	^(c)	14	^(c)	4	1	5	4	65	3	7	—	4	1	2	—	1	
Utilized flakes	79	34	6	—	10	6	7	104	26	10	—	11	1	8	—	—	
Miscellaneous retouch	72	17	13	3	6	6	2	37	5	6	—	15	—	4	—	—	
Scrapers	38	22	3	3	3	8	7	48	3	1	—	19	1	5	2	—	
Core scrapers	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Concave scrapers	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Knife forms	^(c)	3	—	1	—	3	1	12	3	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	
Fabricators	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Awls ^(d)	^(c)	3	—	1	—	—	—	19	5	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Arrowheads	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
TOTAL	2588	1731	416	169	366	126	339	4370	703	322	6	622	9	179	33	10	
Waste % Patinated	75	77	70	85	77	74	84	85	78	79	25	88	80	86	33	100	
<i>Volcanic tuff</i>																	
Waste flakes	—	9 ^(d)	2	—	2	—	—	10	1	—	1	4	—	7	—	—	
Cores	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Lumps	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Blades	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	
Microoliths	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Microburins	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Bulbar rejects	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	
Scrapers	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Core rejuvenations	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	
Retouched flakes and blades	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	
TOTAL	7	10	2	NIL	2	NIL	NIL	15	2	NIL	1	8	NIL	8	NIL	NIL	

a – includes obliquely blunted flakes.

b – provisional classification of surface finds.

c – separate details unavailable; flints with Mr J. C. Bonsall for study.

d – one flake has partially polished surface.

