FIELDWALKING IN THE WHITE PEAK: RECENT RESULTS

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This short paper reports the results of fieldwalking by a small number of students from the Department of Prehistory and Archaeology, Sheffield University, in the winter of 1981-82. Ploughed fields were searched in three areas: Elton Common, Gratton Moor, and east of Minning Low (Fig. 1). The teams walked each field in straight transects at ten metre intervals, with the finds being bagged separately for each transect. The material recovered from the three areas is listed in Table 1, and a selection of the artifacts is illustrated in Figure 2.

Most of the flint tools from the three areas can be dated according to typological comparisons to the late neolithic/early bronze age period *c.* 2500-1500 b.c. There are also intrusions of medieval, post-medieval and possibly mesolithic material. The tools which indicate a definite late neolithic/early bronze age date include the scrapers, particularly the discoidal scraper from Minning Low (Fig. 2: 9), the leaf-shaped arrowhead from Elton Common (Fig. 2: 2), and the butt of the polished axe from Elton Common (Fig. 2: 1). The latter belongs to the Group VI source of axes in the Lake District (Smith, 1979), but the almost complete stone axe from Gratton Mor (Fig. 2: 6) cannot be placed into any of the known groups by visual comparisons and petrological analysis is required. This axe is partially pecked on both sides, possibly the result of being reworked for hafting in the Bronze Age (Roe, 1979). The microblade (Fig. 2: 13) and thumbnail scraper (Fig. 2: 11) could date to the same period as the rest of the flint tools, or perhaps they could be mesolithic.

The medieval material includes six pottery sherds from Gratton Moor which are of a red fabric and have traces of green glaze on some of the surfaces; there are also three badly weathered sherds from the Minning Low fields. The post-medieval artifacts were found in two concentrations. The first group (a stoneware sherd, modern pottery and clay pipes) was recovered from Field 1 on Elton Common; this field was the nearest of those searched to Mouldridge Grange and it is likely that the material derives from the Grange. The second group of material consisted of slag, found near the lead rakes in the vicinity of Minning Low.

Some years ago prehistoric material was collected systematically from Elton Common, and possible settlement areas were identified from the distribution of surface

Table 1 *Artifacts found in fieldwalking in the White Peak, 1981-82. The areas are mapped in Figure 1.*

		ELTON COMMON				GRATTON MOOR									MINNING LOW											
field number:		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
chert	tool	1																										
	waste	1																										
flint	arrowhead			1																								
	blade	2	33	5	1	2		1			1			3	1		4	3	4		1			1	3	1	1	
	core		1	1					1																			
	knife											1						1									1	
	scraper	2	1											1				1	2				1			1		
	utilised flake					6	1	6	5		3	1	4						1	3		1	1		1	1	1	
	waste	12	47	19	2										1		1	6	2	3	3	1	1	1	7	4	2	
pottery	sherd	1					1				3		1	1				1		1								
stone	axe			1								1																

Fig. 1 Map of Gratton Moor, Elton Common and Minning Low, showing fields searched (shaded).

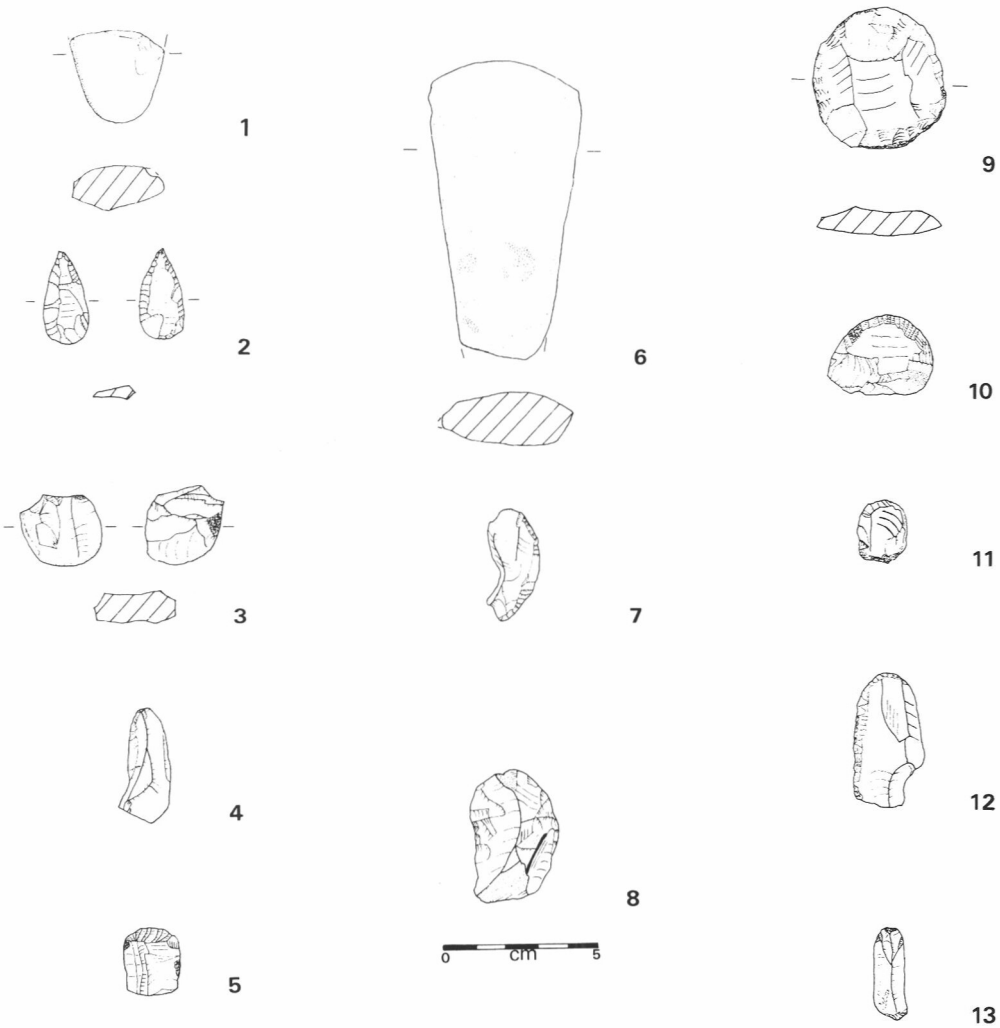

Fig. 2 Artifacts discovered in recent fieldwalking in the White Peak. 1-5 Elton Common; 6-8 Gratton Moor; 9-13 Minning Low. 1. butt of polished axe, greenstone Group VI; 2. leaf shaped arrowhead, patinated flint; 3. core, translucent flint; 4. blade, translucent flint; 5. end scraper, translucent flint; 6. polished stone axe, turquoise with white flecks, ungrouped; 7. knife, patinated and translucent flint; 8. side scraper, translucent flint; 9. discoidal scraper, grey flint; 10. end scraper, translucent flint; 11. thumbnail scraper, patinated flint; 12. knife, yellow water-worn flint; 13. blade, patinated flint.

material (Radley and Cooper, 1968). The concentration of material differs somewhat today. For example, our Field 3 was divided into three at the time of the original study (termed Fields 19, 20 and 21 by Radley and Cooper); they found a large scatter of artifacts in their Field 19, whereas we found a small concentration of blades in the southeast corner of Field 3, the same locality. The present study also indicates that the neolithic occupation area may extend further towards Mouldridge Grange (Fields 1, 2 and 3) than Radley and Cooper envisaged. More recent survey by the North Derbyshire Archaeological Trust (Hart, 1981) identified a settlement area in our Field 4 (Primary

Record No. 3891 of that survey); our own work did not re-locate this group of material, but this may be a result of the adverse weather conditions at the time we walked the field. On Gratton Moor, too, a settlement area of prehistoric flints was noted by the North Derbyshire Archaeological Trust (Primary Record No. 0983), whereas we found relatively few finds here and certainly no concentrations. In the Minning Low area, however, our results do correspond with that of the Trust's survey, which identified a late neolithic/early bronze age scatter of material with no specific concentrations (Primary Records Nos. 0447 and 0448).

These differing results from field survey have been noted in other programmes of fieldwalking in Britain and Europe, wherever areas have been searched several times over a number of years. Systematic analysis of this kind in southern Italy, for example, found that to some extent the archaeological sites "came on and off like traffic lights" in the different periods of survey according to differing conditions of weather, vegetation, team experience and so on (Lloyd and Barker, 1981). However, they also found that perhaps 75% of the data retrieved in one locality were directly comparable with the data found there five years' earlier and hence they concluded that, whilst archaeological maps produced by fieldwalking cannot be treated as Ordnance Survey maps of the real world, for each major period represented by recoverable surface material "intensive and systematic archaeological surveys should be able to provide the crucial information about settlement *densities* and *patterns*" (Lloyd and Barker, 1981: 291).

Archaeological survey in the White Peak has provided a typical example of the constraints and opportunities inherent in surface data. On the one hand, it is clear that at present we have very little understanding of the relationship between what we find in the modern ploughsoil and what was there originally. Certainly a great deal more work is needed before we can quantify how much of the data at a particular site is likely to be repeated on the surface from season to season; moreover, both systematic analysis of surface distributions and excavations will be needed before we can understand anything of the nature, scale and frequency of the prehistoric occupation represented by the artifact spreads discussed in this paper. On the other hand, it is still true to say that the discovery of the numerous late neolithic/early bronze age scatters in the White Peak by the various programmes of fieldwalking (especially that of the North Derbyshire Archaeological Survey) has been one of the most important contributions in recent years to knowledge of upland settlement in prehistoric Britain. Practised systematically and with clear research goals, fieldwalking remains an extremely cost-efficient technique for archaeologists.

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