

IV.—A COLLECTION OF PREHISTORIC MATERIAL FROM HEBBURN MOOR, NORTHUMBERLAND.

BY NANCY NEWBIGIN.

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By kind permission of Mrs. Rogerson of New Hall Farm, near Fowberry, the society had the privilege of seeing, at its May meeting last year, the collection of prehistoric objects gathered by members of her family during the last eighty years in the neighbourhood of Hebburn Moor and Old Bewick, where the Rogerson family were, till recently, farming. The existence of the collection had long been known to archæologists, but it had not before been exhibited. The society's thanks are due to Mrs. Rogerson for allowing the collection to be shown in the Black Gate for a period, and for permission to publish it. The present paper covers all the local prehistoric material in the collection. The rest consists of geological specimens and a few foreign antiquities. The collection adds a large amount to the recorded prehistoric finds from the district, and is of special interest in that it comes from a fairly restricted area, and is well labelled.

Hebburn Moor lies in a stretch of country which in prehistoric times must have had great importance both as a settlement area and as a traffic route, the ridge of sandstone hills overlooking the east bank of the Till; it provides an unbroken stretch of open, well-drained country running north from Eglingham to Kyloe, with connections at its southern end to the Cheviots on the east and Coquetdale to the south, by the ridge of the Beanley and Glanton hills.

Although a glance at the map in the *History of Northumberland*, vol. XIV, shows the number of camps, village sites and cup-marked stones that crowd the ridge, the recorded museum finds are poor in comparison. But this collection does much to restore the balance, and suggests that intensive search over a long period might have produced a similar wealth of small finds from other parts of the ridge. It should be remembered that the collection was made without excavation, and therefore does not include funerary pottery, whose scarcity is in any case partly due to the systematic rifling of barrows by shepherds of which Greenwell complains.¹

The great concentrations of finds already known² from the Till basin are along the western foothills (by Wooperton, Ilderton, Lilburn and Wooler) and along the low, broken ridge which divides the plain longitudinally (by Fowberry, Doddington, Wrangham and Ford). But on the eastern ridge (east of the Hetton Burn and the Low, and of the Till itself south of the Chatton bend) finds are few. The Chatton swords³ are the only metal objects. The known pottery consists of the neolithic A cup from Old Bewick,⁴ two beakers,⁵ two food-vessels,⁶ and a fragment of "ultimate bronze age" pottery from Old Bewick Camp.⁷ Of the nine stone axes recorded by Mr. Cowen for the area, none are from the eastern ridge; and of twenty-one flints our ridge yielded only a barbed and tanged arrowhead (a surface find) from Old Bewick, two flint knives,⁸ and a fragment found with the food-vessel from Beanley West Farm.

¹ *British Barrows*, p. 418.

² *History of Northumberland*, vol. XIV, p. 56, Map A.

³ *Catalogue of the Alnwick Castle Museum*, pp. 51 and 53.

⁴ *Arch. Ael.*, 4th ser.; vol. XII, p. 148.

⁵ Bewick Moor (*British Barrows*, p. 418) and Beanley Moor (Abercromby, *Bronze Age Pottery*, vol. I, p. 89, no. 159a).

⁶ Blawearie (*British Barrows*, cc) and Beanley West Farm (Cat. A.C.M.10).

⁷ *History of Northumberland*, vol. XIV, p. 32.

⁸ From Blawearie (*British Barrows*, cc) with the jet necklace mentioned in this paper, and from Harehope (*ibid.* cci) in a cist with an unburnt burial.

To this the new collection adds five stone axes, or fragments of axes, thirty-two beads from a jet necklace, a spindle whorl, a miniature jet cup, a fragment of a jet cup or armlet, seven barbed and tanged arrowheads, several leaf arrowheads, slug knives, and over seventy worked flints of various sorts. There are three sherds, one of Roman and two of mediaeval pottery. Where no other find-spot is given, all objects come from the neighbourhood of Hebburn Moor.

THE STONE AXES.

1. A very heavy coarse basalt which might well have come from the Central Valley of Scotland. It is of the type, generally considered to come early in our series, with pointed butt, oval section, and wide-splayed cutting edge. Length 4.4", breadth 2.5", thickness 1.2". Plate VIII, no. 3.
2. A heavy black basalt of a widespread type whose source could not be distinguished by eye. Similar to no. 1, but with wider butt, less splayed cutting edge, and greater length in proportion to width. Length 5.1", breadth 2.2", thickness 1.1". Plate VIII, no. 2.
3. Finely polished Borrowdale volcanic ash entirely covered with white flint-like patina, except where a later chip on the cutting edge shows the fine-grained green stone. It is a brittle rock, though a popular material for axes: several large chips and scars are as heavily patinated as the rest of the surface, and may have been made during manufacture. It is of the type considered latest in our series, with fairly broad, thin butt, sides squared, and length great in proportion to breadth. Like no. 2 it has a slightly asymmetrical cutting edge, a feature common in north country axes. Length 6.7", breadth 2.6", thickness 1.4". Found at Blawearie in 1892. Plate VIII, no. 1.

4. Fragment of a finely polished axe of green Silurian greywacke from the Southern Uplands. It has a pointed oval section 2.5" wide by 1.2" thick, and consists of a piece about $1\frac{1}{2}$ " long from apparently the centre of the axe. Found at Blawearie. Plate VIII, no. 5.
5. Fragment of polished flint axe. The working end of the axe, finely polished to a sharp edge, has been broken across, and the broken edge re-chipped for use as a scraper. It is impossible to give measurements for a piece so broken and re-worked, but it appears to have been much lighter and smaller than the other four axes. It is of Yorkshire flint, and the careful re-use of the broken portion illustrates the scarcity of the imported raw material. Plate VIII, no. 4.

Though these axes used to be regarded as the hall-mark of the Neolithic, it is well known that especially in the north their use continued well into the Bronze Age (as is attested by many Yorkshire Bronze Age burials), and that the types into which they have been subdivided have only an approximate chronological significance. Nevertheless, taken along with other evidence, they may fairly be treated as the work of neolithic people who came into Northumberland about the beginning of the Bronze Age. There is the Old Bewick cup, Greenwell's Barrow CLXXXVIII near Ford (which also contained part of a polished flint axe, and a triangular flint similar to one here published from Blawearie), the neolithic B pottery from Ford, and a number of leaf and lozenge arrowheads here published.

The material of the five axes throws some light on trade routes. The Borrowdale volcanic specimen has no parallel among the other nine local examples; but Mr. Sheppard estimates that over fifty per cent of the stone axes in East Yorkshire are of that material,⁹ and that there must have been a trade route between the Lake District and East Yorkshire either in the raw material or the finished goods.

⁹ T. Sheppard, *Hull Museum Publications* no. 122, p. 45.

It is possible that this trade also reached Northumberland through the Tyne-Eden route which was so much used in the Bronze Age; but it seems just as likely in view of the close connections of the whole north-east coast, that the occasional specimens in north Northumberland came from Yorkshire, which had the main trade with the Lake District. The Silurian greywacke is matched in an axe from Pallinsburn in our area, and the brown basalt axe also speaks to connections with Scotland, perhaps the reverse of those movements which took the Peterborough culture up the east coast to Hedderwick in East Lothian. The connections with Yorkshire, of course, are close, and demonstrated by the fragmentary axe of Yorkshire flint as well as by the other flint implements.

I am grateful to Dr. Raistrick, who kindly identified the materials of the axes and their probable sources.

THE JET OBJECTS.

Jet was, of course, a fairly common material for ornament in the Bronze Age of northern England, and the Till basin has produced five typical pieces, a V-bored button of beaker type from Ford, and fragments of four necklaces, from Blawearie, Wooler and Doddington, including two of the crescentic type associated with the food-vessel culture. Of the three jet pieces in the Rogerson collection, one is part of an already known necklace, and two are unique in the north, one indeed without parallel anywhere.

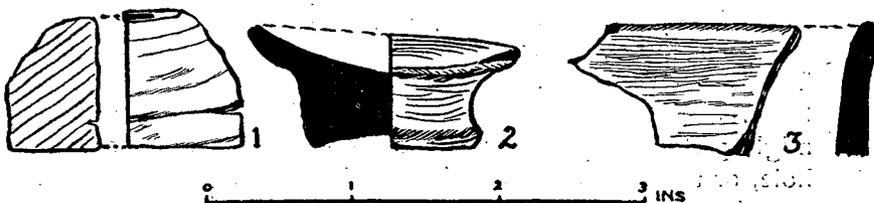
1. *The necklace.*

Thirty disc beads of jet and two barrel beads form part of the necklace excavated by Greenwell from his Barrow cc at Blawearie. There is no doubt of the identification, as Mr. Rogerson was with Canon Greenwell at the time, and found these beads afterwards. They are all of jet, not shale as stated by Greenwell. The measurements fall within the range of those given in *British Barrows*. The barrow

contained two cists, one with a food-vessel, and the other with the necklace and a flint knife. Plate VIII, no. 8.

2. *Fragment of cup or armlet.*

This is a small curved strip of jet, with one edge rounded and finished like a rim, the other edge broken. (See plate VIII, no. 7, and text fig. below, no. 3.) The surface is very smooth and polished, and appears to be lathe-turned. From the $1\frac{1}{2}$ " of rim that remains, one can deduce a diameter of $3\frac{1}{2}$ ". The profile is practically upright, but with a slight outward curve. As prehistoric jet cups are unknown in Britain, and shale cups, on present knowledge,¹⁰ limited to



Dorset, Wilts, Devon and Cornwall, one looks for other possible explanations. Bracers, or archers' wrist guards, were made of jet in the early Bronze Age, but were rather narrower than this strip would be when complete, and were of course straight, not curved like this. It might be a bracelet, but that would equally be without parallel, and in any case it would be rather large and rather broad for a bracelet. Mr. R. S. Newall's paper on shale cups lists nine examples, and suggests that they must have been lathe-turned. Most have rims 3 " to $3\frac{1}{2}$ " in diameter, and have a somewhat beaker-like shape, with upright rim, slightly out-turned like the present specimen. Newall also mentions a very doubtful example (now lost) from the East Riding, with the remark that "there is no reason why one should not have been found there." Mr. Piggott, however, con-

¹⁰ R. S. Newall, *Wilts. Archaeological Magazine*, XLIV (1927-9), pp. 111-117.

siders them "an individual product of the Wessex culture."¹¹ But as the other jet cup also represents an idea derived from the Wessex culture, it is not impossible that this fragment has the same explanation.

3. *The miniature jet cup.* (Plate VIII, no. 6, and text fig., p. 109, no. 2.)

This is even more puzzling, and a unique find of great interest. It has the appearance of a shallow saucer on a roughly shaped pedestal; the saucer is a rough oval, $1\frac{3}{4}$ " on its long axis, and with part of one of the long sides broken away. The concave surface is carefully hollowed out and finely polished, but the under side, and the sides and base of the pedestal are rather roughly carved, and unpolished. The pedestal is round, $1\frac{1}{4}$ " wide, and slightly hollowed underneath. There is a very slight groove between the saucer and the base, which suggested that it might perhaps be a stud or boss, intended to fasten a button-hole, or to be sunk in an object of some other material; it was also suggested that it was a stopper or lid. But against these are two facts, that the groove is not deep enough to give the stud any grip, and that the carefully hollowed and polished surface would have no meaning on such an explanation. Mr. Hawkes, who kindly examined both pieces, writes: "I think you are right that the larger of these two Hebburn Moor jet pieces is a miniature cup. Not a toggle, not a bottle-stopper; not, I think, a knob. The concave surface is clearly dished carefully and on purpose. Bronze cups, whether handled or 'incense,' were made in shale and amber: why not jet?" For the form, he suggests a parallel with the "vase-supports" so plentifully used as ritual vessels in the megalithic tombs of Brittany and Jersey. Its form, deriving through the neolithic of Chassey from the old pedestal vases of south-eastern Europe, was a low, hollow-based pedestal supporting a splayed-out

¹¹ Stuart Piggott, "The Early Bronze Age in Wessex," *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, 1938, p. 83.

saucer-shaped top, often decorated on the upper surface.¹² Its ritual nature is amply proved: twelve were found in the tomb of La Hougue Bie, and seventy-nine in the stone circles of Er Lannic.¹³ A variant of the vase support has been identified in Britain by Mr. Piggott in the "Aldbourne cups"¹⁴ which form such a striking feature of the Early Bronze Age culture of Wessex introduced about 1700 B.C. by invaders from Brittany. The Aldbourne cups, along with the Grâpe cups (also part of the Wessex complex and derived from Brittany) are the ancestors of the "incense" cups which, spreading throughout Britain in the Middle Bronze Age, were always used as ritual vessels, and probably with some recollection of the movement from which they originally sprang. If the ritual of the localized but brilliant and powerful Wessex culture could thus influence the remote parts of Britain, there is no inherent reason why the jet cup should not be derived from the same inspiration, although there is no exact parallel. Mr. Hawkes writes: "It is certain that these cups were of ritual significance, so that a tiny one made in the local precious substance is quite intelligible in the fairly far north, where comprehension of the original cult-magic involved was probably always sketchy." Although the vase-support is one of the cult objects of the megalithic religion, it is significant that the invaders from Brittany who brought the Wessex culture were not themselves megalith builders, but were an offshoot of the Bronze Age conquerors of Brittany. For perhaps two generations before the invasion of Wessex they had lived as a ruling caste in Brittany, holding rigidly aloof from the beliefs and customs of the old megalithic culture: the two cultures exist side by side but with scarcely any fusion. It is therefore surprising to find the vase-support, with all its magical associations, forming part of the repertory of the Wessex invaders. In this Mr. Hawkes



¹² C. F. C. Hawkes, *The Prehistoric Foundations of Europe*, fig. 17, nos. 12-14.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 85-6.

¹⁴ Piggott, *op. cit.*, figs. 12-15 and pp. 71-3.

sees a possible explanation of the invasion itself: "For this megalithic magic was just what the invaders who remained behind there would have nothing to do with, and one can easily see that those of the invading caste, who—perhaps in the second generation—stooped to intercourse with the dreaded superstition of their subjects, might be driven out to seek their fortune in a less rigorous land."¹⁵ This ingenious and convincing suggestion may well explain the strength of the tradition that carried the derivatives of the vase-support to the ends of Britain, and affords a fascinating glimpse of the motives and ideas underlying events, such as archæology can seldom give.

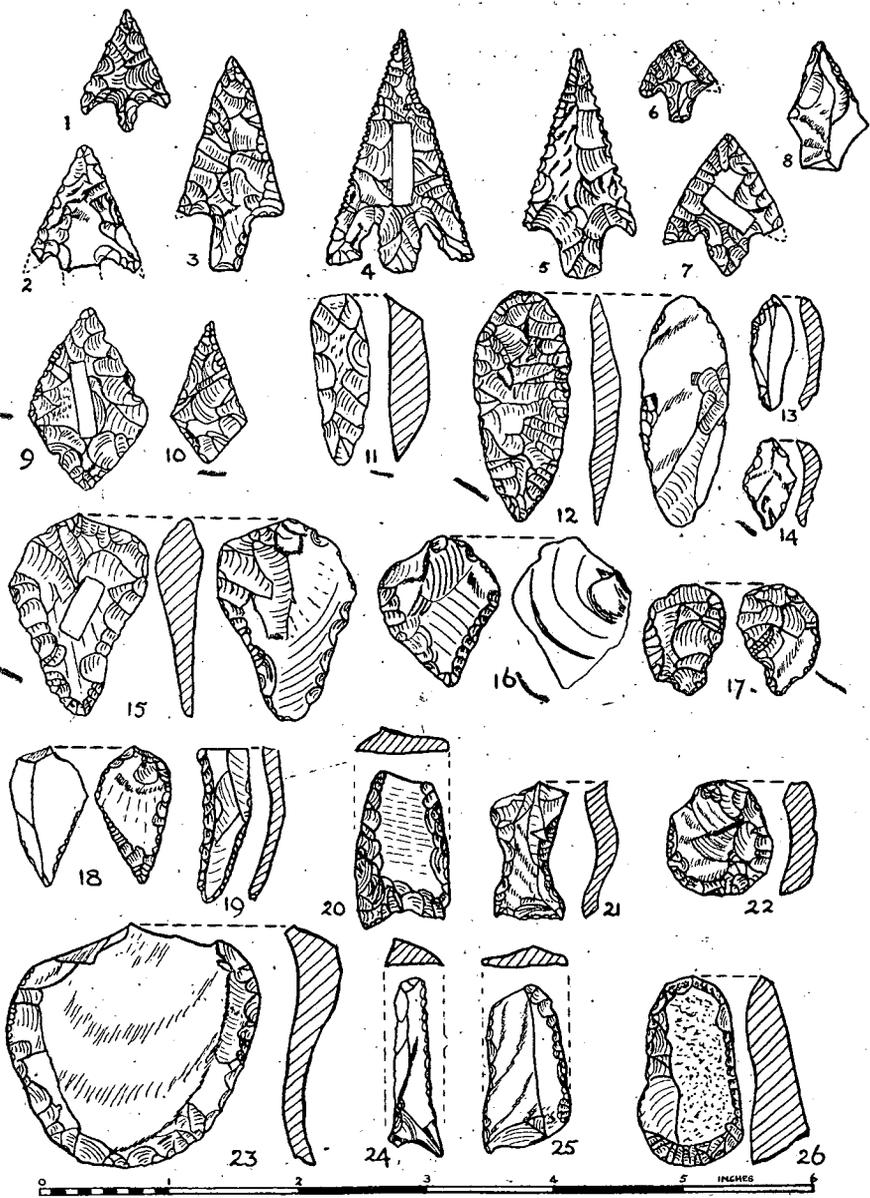
THE FLINTS.

1. Blade blunted down one edge; bulbar surface unworked. Fig. 1, no. 13.
2. Flake of worn, rolled flint, bulbar surface unworked. Fig. 1, no. 14. Both have a microlithic appearance, but need be no earlier than similar ones from Greenwell's barrow CLXXVIII,¹⁶ which were found with neolithic A pottery.
3. Lozenge arrowhead from Hepburn Moor, 1905. Fig. 1, no. 9. The two nicks may be original, to facilitate hafting, but appear to have been enlarged by the thread used to mount the flint on a card.
4. Lozenge arrowhead. Fig. 1, no. 10. From Quarry House.
5. Thin flake, roughly leaf-shaped, finely worked on both faces. May be neolithic. Fig. 1, no. 17.
6. Thicker flake, roughly leaf-shaped, both faces only partly worked. From Blawearie. Fig. 1, no. 15. May be neolithic.
- 7-14. Barbed and tanged arrowheads. Fig. 1, nos. 1-7. No. 4 is from Hepburn Moor (1904), and no. 7 from

¹⁵ Hawkes, *op. cit.*, p. 316.

¹⁶ *Arch. Ael.*, 4th ser., XII, pl. XIX, figs. 3 and 13.





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FIG. I.

- Blawearie Garden (1902). It will be noticed that except for no. 2, which is broken, and no. 4 (an exceptionally fine specimen) the tang is longer than the barb.
15. (Fig. 1, no. 8.) Flake worked on one face only, but probably hafted in a manner similar to the barbed and tanged arrowheads.
 16. "Slug" knife from Akeld Hill, 1925. Fig. 1, no. 12. Convex surface finely trimmed. Bulb trimmed off other face. A fine specimen of the typical food-vessel knife.
 17. Slug knife. Fig. 1, no. 11. A much cruder specimen.
 18. Thin flake, 1.2" long, trimmed on one face in the slug manner.
 - 19-20. Broken flakes similar to 18.
 21. From Hepburn Moor Old Field, 1912. Similar flake snapped across the middle and retrimmed along the break.
 22. Broad pointed flake with one surface carefully trimmed, the other untouched. Fig. 1, no. 16.
 - 23-24. Similar flakes showing use, but not trimmed.
 25. Narrow pointed flake worked on upper surface only. Fig. 1, no. 19.
 - 26-33. Eight similar points, from 1" to 3" in length.
 - 34-37. Four flakes of similar shape, but used without trimming.
 38. Pointed flake worked on bulbar face only—an unusual feature. Fig. 1, no. 18.
 - 39-53. Fifteen worked or used flakes of nondescript form.
 54. Roughly triangular flint worked over both faces. Probably hafted transversely. Very finely worked.
 - 55-60. Six more roughly worked flakes of similar type.
 - 61-62. Broken pieces of broad flat flakes, trimmed with large flakes on one surface only, with edge retouched. Apparently of triangular form when complete.
 63. Broken piece of thin, broad flake, apparently originally oval, trimmed like the last with broad, shallow, parallel flakes and finely retouched edge. Bulbar surface plain. Brockdam, 1905.

64. Broad flake with sides retouched, and end of one side worked to a point. Fig. 1, no. 25.
65. Narrow flake with one edge steeply blunted, the other retouched and its end worked to a point. Fig. 1, no. 24.
- 66-68. Three flakes like 65, but more roughly worked.
69. Broad flake with both edges retouched and worked to points, end trimmed as hollow scraper. Fig. 1, no. 20.
70. Flake similarly trimmed, but with both sides hollowed and end straight. Fig. 1, no. 21.
71. End scraper, coarsely worked, $2\frac{1}{4}$ " long. Old House Bog, 1912.
72. End scraper, $1\frac{3}{4}$ " long. Brockdam, 1906.
73. End scraper, more finely worked. Fig. 1, no. 26.
74. End scraper on thin narrow flake. Hepburn Moor, north side, 1911.
- 75-76. Two more end scrapers.
77. Long, narrow, curved flake, with sides retouched, and end trimmed to broad blunt point showing marks of pressure. Probably a fabricator. Old Bewick, 1905.
- 78-80. Similar to 77.
81. Broad thin flake $1\frac{1}{2}$ " by 2", with end steeply trimmed as round scraper.
82. Broken piece of somewhat similar scraper, from Wandy Law Moor, 1906.
83. Large round scraper, from Blawearie, 1875. Fig. 1, no. 23.
84. Thumb scraper. Fig. 1, no. 22.
85. Similar but of poor flint. Brockdam, 1904.
- 86-90. Five thumb scrapers, including one only half an inch wide, with part of the edge spoilt by starch fracture.

There is nothing remarkable about this collection of flints: they include a good range of all the common implements from neolithic times onwards, with flakes worked into the usual range of knives, points and scrapers, with various intermediate and nondescript forms. The only striking feature is the careful re-use of the tiniest and most

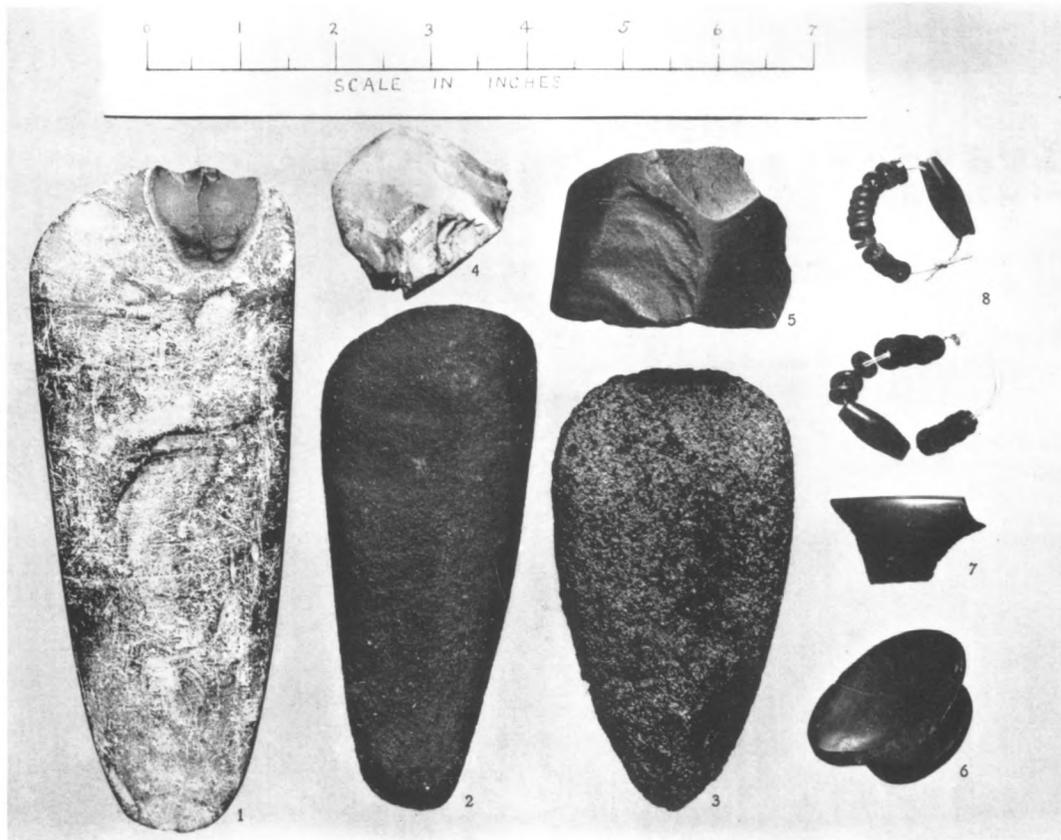
unpromising scraps, suggesting the scarcity of the raw material.

SPINDLE WHORL.

The spindle whorl (see text fig., p. 109, no. 1) is of a coarse, heavy grey clay, with truncated biconical profile, and cylindrical perforation. From Blawearie.

POTTERY.

A Roman sherd of late second century grey ware has no definite find-spot. Of two battered sherds of mediaeval appearance, one came from Old Bewick.



AXES AND JET OBJECTS FROM THE ROGERSON COLLECTION.

