

FLINT IMPLEMENTS FROM THE BATH DOWNS

The Collections of
J. P. E. Falconer, J. W. Gardner and E. A. Shore

By

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ABSTRACT

An attempt is made to describe these collections in general terms and to assess their significance. The collections have been derived from surface finds. There have been no excavations. The periods represented by the typology of the implements range from Late Upper Palaeolithic/Mesolithic through Neolithic to Bronze Age.

THE MATERIAL

The collections have been made by searching ploughed fields on the Bath Downs over many years. The earliest recorded date is 1908. The latest date is not known but it was after 1948. There are two main collections: one made by the late J. P. E. Falconer (F), supplemented by J. W. Gardner (G) of Kingswood School and a second made by E. A. Shore (S). G has been able in some cases to define areas where there are concentrations of implements within individual sites. Boys from Kingswood School have assisted in collecting from time to time.

The implements of the F collection number several thousand and are in the School Museum. There is a running numerical catalogue in *m.s.* form but the implements are not grouped under sites. A proportion of this collection was loaned to University of Bristol Spelaeological Society Museum. When this was destroyed in 1940, a large proportion of the loaned collection was lost. The remainder is less than 300 items, mostly scrapers, and nearly a quarter of these are from one site, Claverton Down. They are catalogued under M9.5, with subdivisions for sites. The F/G series from Charmy Down, totalling over 500 pieces, was loaned to Professor Grimes and have been described elsewhere (1960, pp.203-214). The material was all returned to the School Museum.

Contemporaneously with F, E. A. Shore (S) also made collections from the same sites and continued collecting after the death of Falconer. He holds his own collection now, (1973), at 15, Darlington Place, Bathwick Hill, Bath*. He has supplied details of certain types of implements in his collection and this information has been combined with the notes by F in the schedule of finds and table.

Both F and S recorded their sites on copies of the O.S. 6 in.-1 mile maps. G has supplemented the entries. On plate 17, the area map, the sites recorded are taken directly from the collectors' maps.

* Since this paper went to press, Mr. Shore has died. His collection will be placed in the City Museum, Bristol.

F recorded on each implement the site and the date at which it was found. Occasionally confusion arises when initials for the site are used since the same initials can apply to more than one site. Dates too are not always clear: usually they are distinctly marked but occasionally a running number is used and this can lead to difficulty of interpretation e.g. 21224 can be either February 21 1924 or December 2nd 1924. Fortunately this is immaterial in such a collection of surface finds. F's numbering of sites is not uniform. His sites 1-9 fall under the Lansdown area or I. This area is not delimited. Some of the sites hardly fall within "Lansdown" as recorded on O.S. maps. The rest of the sites are numbered by F as II-XV.

In either 1933 or 1934 Mr. Charles Green, then at the Gloucester Museum, made pencil sketches and notes on the polished and chipped flint axes in UBSS Museum. He selected those from the F collection for his study of the Cotswold flint axes. In 1969 he sent me his sketches and notes. The pieces have been redrawn by Mrs. Sheila Watkins and some of the drawings are reproduced here (Figs. 40, 41). These are the only records of the axe fragments. There were no complete implements.

In the School Museum is a typescript about the collection together with a series of pencilled *m.s.* notes on individual sites. In the *m.s.* F records frequently "Destroyed Bristol, 1940" (DB/1940). This reference has to be modified as part of the collection, unknown to F, did survive. The typescript account is undated but the internal evidence suggests that it was written about 1950. The following notes have been abstracted from F's typescript.

- a. 47 sites known on the Downs. 21 of these "no longer available". [Presumably built over or otherwise destroyed. Shore lists 42 sites not all identical with those of F. EKT.]
- b. 37 sites found in period 1908-1912. 10 sites since 1924. All are recorded on O.S. maps 6 in.-1 mile.
- c. The finds have been made by searching ploughed fields. No signs of any dwellings were found and some sites have microliths. [Some sites are sharply delimited by field boundaries as recorded on O.S. maps, 1930 ed. These boundaries usually marked the limit of ploughing when the site was examined. The real areas of such sites are thus not necessarily fully known. EKT.]
- d. A mixture of types of implements occurs on some sites suggesting successive occupation. On the site the soil cover varies from 6-10 in. with rubble underneath. [Weathered surface of Oolite. EKT.]
- e. Ploughing is often carried deep enough to reach the rubble so there is no stratigraphy on the sites. [This has never been tested by excavation. The soil cover is thin but ploughing would not necessarily destroy postholes and ditches. EKT.]
- f. Sites can be assigned to various prehistoric periods by the types of implements found:—microliths and chisel-ended arrowheads=Mesolithic; lozenge and leaf shaped arrowheads=Neolithic; barbed and tanged arrowheads=Bronze Age.
- g. Late Upper Palaeolithic sites may exist perhaps being indicated by end scrapers on long blades. ["Lanceheads" trimmed on one surface only, e.g. Fig. 43, could be Final Upper Palaeolithic EKT.] Derby Point [ST 716702] yielded a graver or burin and "a piece of fossilised ox bone with the outer face polished and striated".
- h. On Farleigh Down was found a small twisted olate made from Broom Chert—possibly Acheulean in date. [But Grimes, 1960, p.212 and Fig. 86(66) shows it to be a piece of a Neolithic polished stone axe. EKT.]

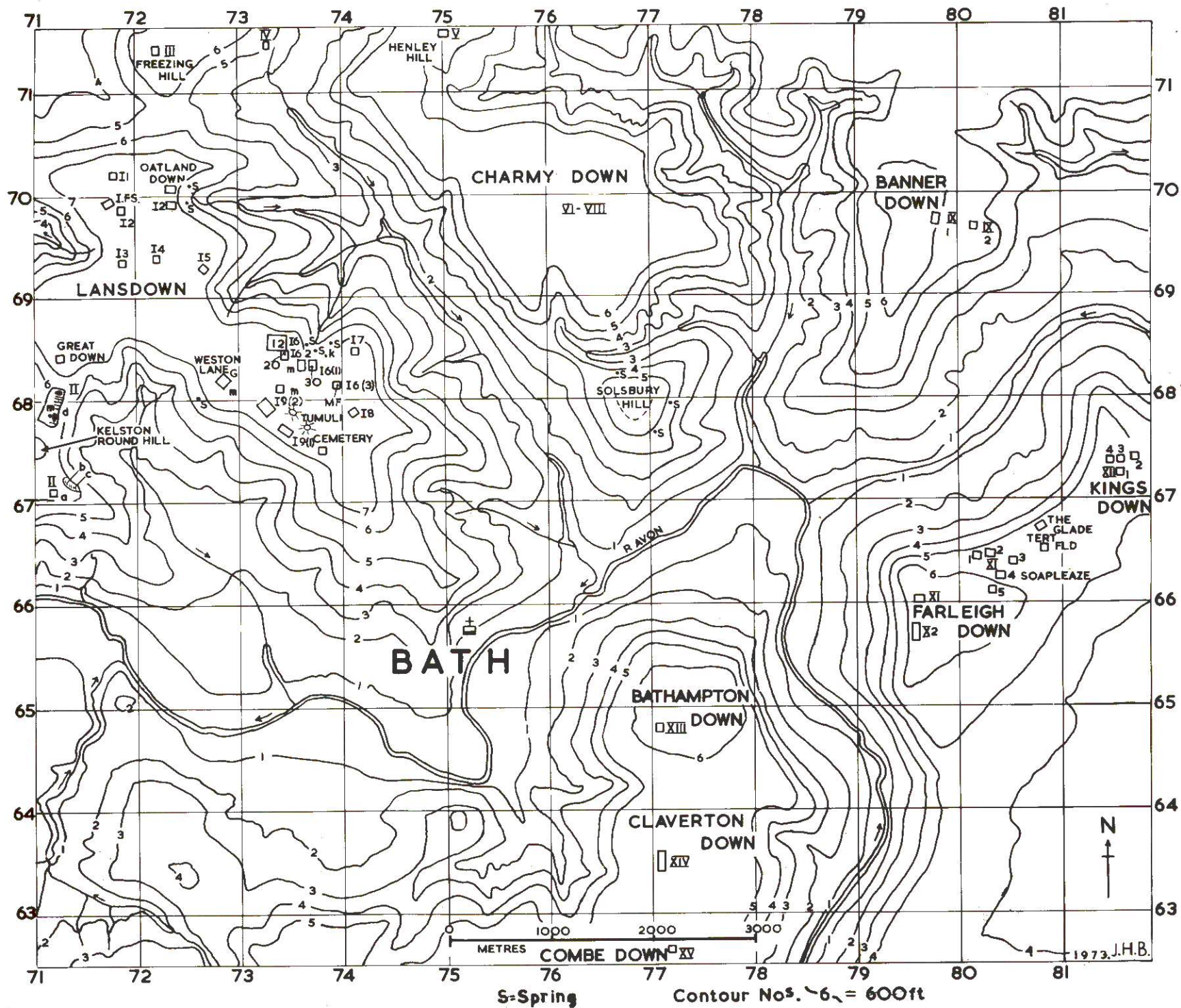


Plate 17

- i. The source of the raw material is considered to be the so-called Tertiary flint, "which occurs on [the] surface of some of the Downs". "They [the Tertiary flints] are especially abundant on Farleigh Down". There is an extensive scatter from Wiltshire to the Cotswolds and they occur frequently on Hampton, Claverton and Combe Down(s) but are rare on the Downs to north and northwest of Bath such as Lansdown, Freezing Hill, Charmy Down *etc.* [See p. 168 for discussion on this origin. EKT.]
- j. The flint occurs as crusted nodules like potatoes down to small pellets. The internal colours vary and are often streaky. It is rather cherty and intractable. The red and yellow [natural] flint, which was never used, "resembles calcined flint".
- k. There are few unpatinated implements. These are black, dark grey and light brown flakes from nodules. The patinated implements when fractured show the same variety of colour. The vast majority of implements have a deep white patina though there are considerable variations on a single site. Nearly all have been struck off cores.
- l. Evans (1897) has recorded quartz pebbles with battered ends in association with flint flakes on Little Solsbury Hill. [This is predominantly an Iron Age site. EKT.]
- m. Besides implements there is much waste material. Most of the implements are small being rarely more than 2.5 in. long. Some have glossy [lustrous] patches on them.

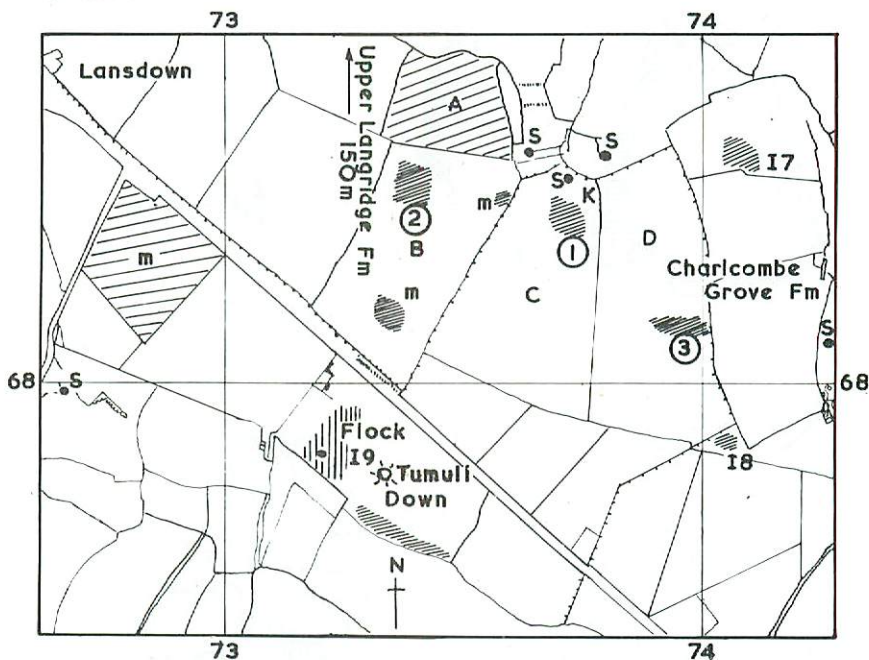


Fig. 39. Upper Langridge Farm Area sites. Based on Ordnance Survey. Crown copyright reserved. 1, 2, 3 and 4 are 12, 20, 30 Acre fields and Mushroom field.

FLINT AXES

These notes on flint axes, both chipped and polished, are taken from Greene's *m.s.* account. All are from the F collection, which also contains other specimens. These are all small pieces on which the polish-

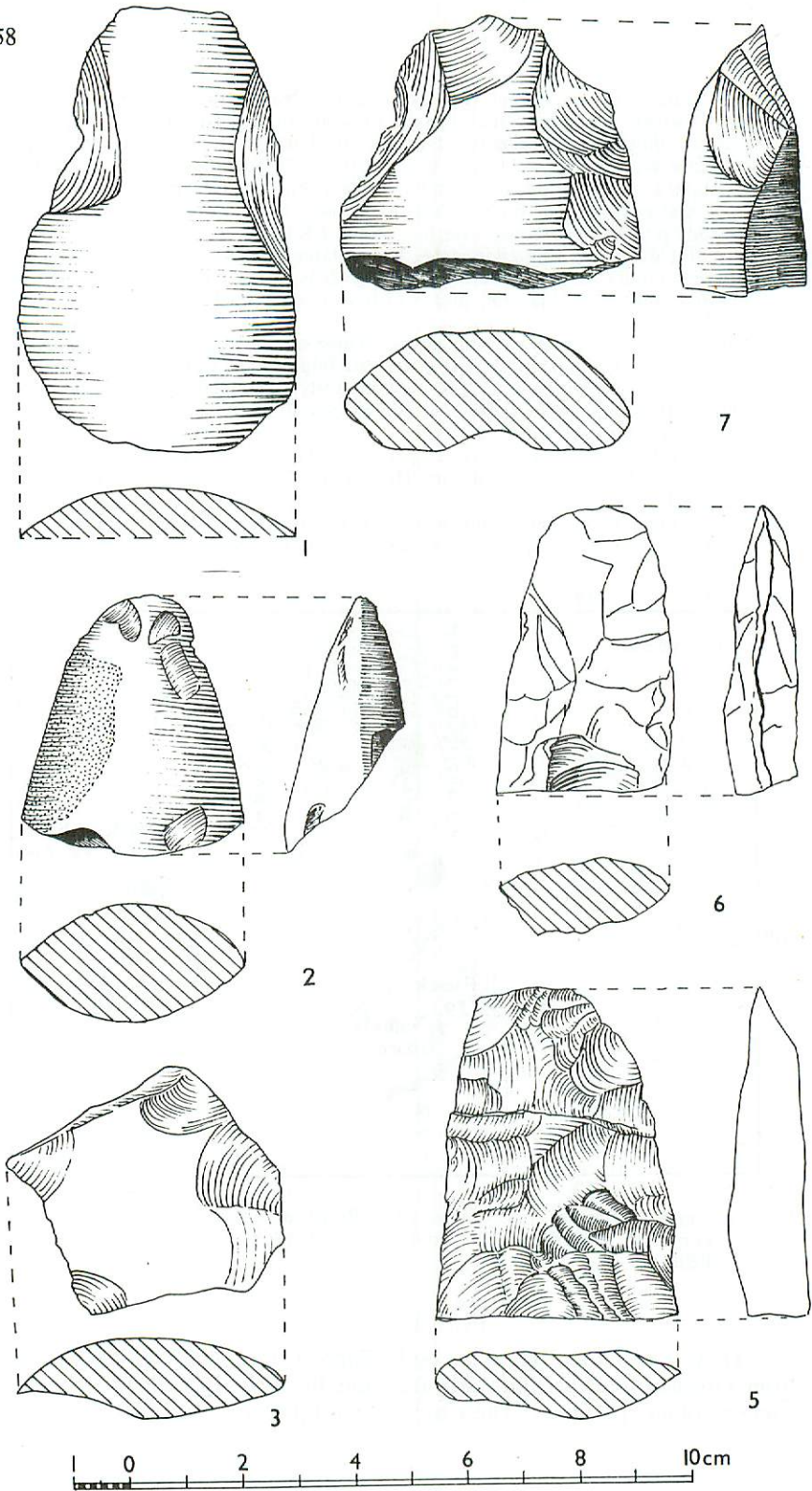


Fig. 40

ing appears as a residual on the surface of other implements. Shore has many further items and his total of 125 polished axe fragments is surprisingly large.

1. Upper Langridge Farm, Lansdown area. Long flake from side of polished axe. Cutting edge present. Patina—white. Few red stain marks.
2. Upper Langridge Farm, Lansdown area. Pointed butt of polished axe. Patina—blue/grey. Disintegrated patches with ochreous stain.
3. Upper Langridge Farm, Lansdown area. Flake from polished axe. Patina—greyish white.
4. Upper Langridge Farm, Lansdown area. Cutting edge of polished axe. Pointed oval section. Patina—greyish white. Traces of red stain. Not illustrated.

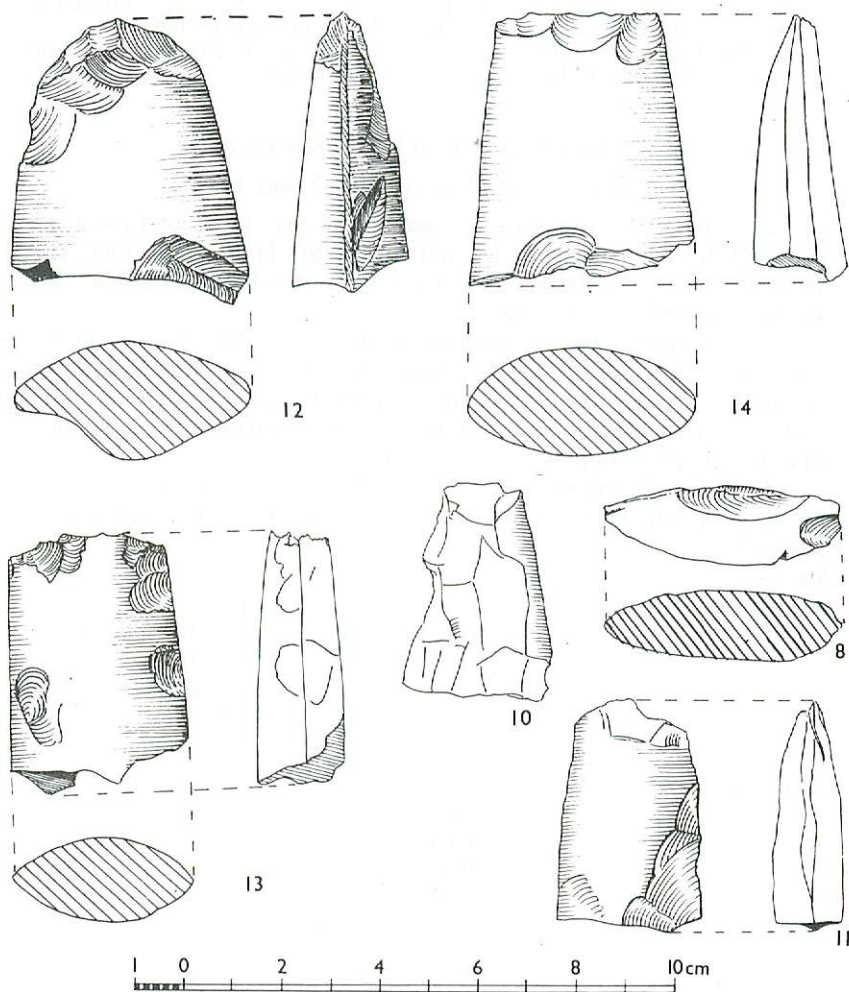


Fig. 41

5. Farleigh Down. Upper portion of chipped axe. Thin butt type with flat pointed sides. Patina—white.
6. Flockdown. Lansdown area. Butt end of chipped axe. Pointed oval section. Patina—greyish white. Traces of red stain.
7. Flockdown. Lansdown area. Piece of polished axe. Oval section with pointed sides. Probable pointed butt. Patina—white. Traces of red/brown stain.
8. Derby Point. Lansdown area. Cutting edge of polished axe. Patina—yellowish white. Traces of red stain.
9. Upper Langridge Farm. Lansdown area. Cutting edge of polished axe. Pointed oval section. Traces of red stain. Not illustrated.
10. Claverton. Piece of polished axe. Probably broad pointed oval section. Traces of red stain. Not illustrated.
11. Claverton. Piece of polished axe. Narrow pointed oval section. Patina—white. Traces of red stain.
13. Hartley Farm. Middle part of polished axe. Pointed oval section. Patina—white. Traces of red stain.
14. Combe Down. Middle part of polished axe. Thin butt type. Pointed oval section with flattened edges. Patina—white to grey. Some red stain.
15. Charne Dowall. Portion of cutting edge and side of polished axe. Perhaps pointed oval section. Patina—white. Not illustrated.

SCHEDULE OF SITES AND FINDS

Plate 17 and Figures 39, 42 and 42a

The site list is based on the maps and *m.s.* notes of Falconer (F) with additions by Gardner (G) and Shore (S). The Roman and Arabic numerals used to designate sites are from F. Un-numbered sites, unless otherwise stated, are from G and S.

Only certain types of implements are listed. The vast majority of items are scrapers varying from thumb-nail to large with scale flaking, usually fine on the small items and coarser on the larger. There are relatively few notched scrapers. There are some knives, occasional borers and awls, a few hammerstones and many cores.

The items listed are microliths, parts of polished flint axes—there are no complete ones—and varieties of arrowheads. The abbreviations used are:—

Microliths			m	
Part of polished axe of flint			paf	
		}	Chisel shaped	ch [includes <i>petit tranchet</i> derivatives EKT.]
			Leaf shaped	lf
			Lozenge shaped	lz
Arrow heads	ah		Triangular	tri
			Hollow based	hb
			Tanged	t
			Barbed and tanged	bt
			Winged	w
		Type uncertain	ty?	

I Lansdown area

1. *Derby Point.* (F) ST 717702, 17/4/1911*. Site is strewn with scrapers, flakes and cores. F. DB/1940, 150 items. (G) site at ST 716699 is SE part of field

extending into wood and *Further Slate* ST 718698. All three are considered to be parts of one site. (S) In area at ST 716700 there is a scatter of burnt human bone. Perhaps this marks a ploughed out barrow.

* A date expressed thus is the date of discovery of the site.

2. *Big Down*. (F) ST 723699, 12/11/1911. It is in eastern part of grid square. Small site at head of valley where there are springs. (S) One of his ah-lf is of Portland chert.
 3. *Brockham*. (F) ST 716693, 21/12/1943. It lies on the golf course east of the wood. There is a good water supply about 200 m to the north. Small site with few implements.
 4. *The Slates*. (F) ST 722693, 8/6/1914. It is extensive. (G) has shown that the site covers the whole of the south and west parts of the field. (S) has a pot of flint that has been used as a hammer. Majority of finds DB/1940.
 5. *Langridge Lane*. (F) ST 726693, 12/4/1914. The site is extensive in the field north of Upper Langridge Farm. (G) has recorded two connected areas of concentration of flints. One yields microliths and the other mainly Neolithic types. The main areas are towards the east of the field and there is a water supply a little further east. (F) made a large collection 1924-1929, DB/1940. [Some items survived. EKT.] (F) "Some of finest implements and axeheads in the existing collection".
 6. *Upper Langridge Farm [Area]*. Fig. 39. There are six sites in an area 700 × 750 m. They include four fields, "12, 20 and 30 Acres, and Mushroom Field". Further north is Charlcombe Grove Farm site. They are clustered round the head of a north sloping valley with numerous springs at its head. F's notes are difficult to follow. G has explained the relative position of the sites.
 - (F1) *30 Acre Field*. Site is in northern part. ST 737683, 19/4/1911. At ST 73774685 a perforated bronze knife was found. It has been figured by Dobson (1931, p.84, Fig. 8).
 - (F2) *20 Acre Field*. ST 733691. 1924. Flints all over field with three areas of concentration. NE corner has microliths. The other main part of (F2) is in NW of field and probably extends over a considerable part of 12 Acre Field, which adjoins it on the north.
 - (F3) *Mushroom Field*. Main area is in centre and east.
 - (F4) *12 Acre Field*. Scatter of flints all over.
 - (F5) *Upper Langridge Farm* site 4. No details.
 7. *Charlcombe Grove Farm*. (F) ST 731684. 24/4/1911. It is on the edge of the Down at 700 ft. O.D. Flints all over field but mainly in the north. DB/1940. There is a spring 200 m away.
 8. *Ensleigh*. (F) ST 740648. 24/11/1943. A small site SE of Mushroom Field.
 9. *Flockdown* [1]. (F) ST 734676. 2/4/1911. DB/1940. There is a heavy concentration along southern border of field. [There are two tumuli in this field—Grinsell, 1971, Charlcombe 10 and 10a].
Flockdown [2]. (G) ST 732678. Considerable scatter of flints with marked concentration at ST 73206785.
 - *Weston Lane or Cricket Ground*. ST 728683. (S) has made some finds here.
 - *Oatland Down*. (S) Area is centred on 723702, 200 m west of Little Down site of (F). It is a 30-acre field and was not ploughed till 1956 and so was unknown to F.
 - *Great Down*. (S) ST 711686.
 - *Cemetery Field*. (S) ST 737675.
- II Kelston Round Hill.** (F) 13/7/1910. F mentions two sites but maps show four, a-d. All are on sloping ground to valley on east, where there are springs. a and c 5/9/1943. (a) ST 712671, (b) ST 713673. DB/1940. Many flakes, cores and some scrapers and knives, one with battered back [Palaeolithic ? EKT.] (c) is in same field as (b) but at SE end; (G) has shown that the material is concentrated along SW side of field towards (a).
 (d) ST 711677. This is a long field running down from NE-SW with site in the southern part. (G) shows main concentrations are in SE part with special

concentrations with microliths at ST 71106778 and 7110808. (F) remarks that all items from KRH sites are rather coarse.

III Freezing Hill. (F) ST 722714, 11/9/1940. DB/1940. Main concentration with microliths is in NW part of field close to bank and ditch of "Camp", which is reasonably dated to the Civil War. There is water not far away. There are flints all over field. (S) has one battered back blade of undoubted Late Upper Palaeolithic type. It is a splendid specimen [EKT].

IV Hamswell. (F) ST 733714, 21/5/1939. A small site east of the cottages with several springs close by and a steep slope down to east.

V Henley Hill. (F) ST 750715, 15/5/1912. DB/1940. More finds made 1933-4. Not DB/1940.

VI-VIII Charmy Down. (F) Approximate centre of area is at ST 7670. First collection DB/1940. Second collection 1929-1940. An adequate description of the whole area and of the second collection is in Grimes (1960, pp.199-244, illustrations in Figs. 82-89). Microliths occur at sites 4, 6, 12, 13, 14 (Fig. 42). S has also collected on Charmy Down though his collection was not seen by Grimes. S has marked his own map and his sites show some differences with those recorded by Grimes and shown in Fig. 42 here. S's sites in general

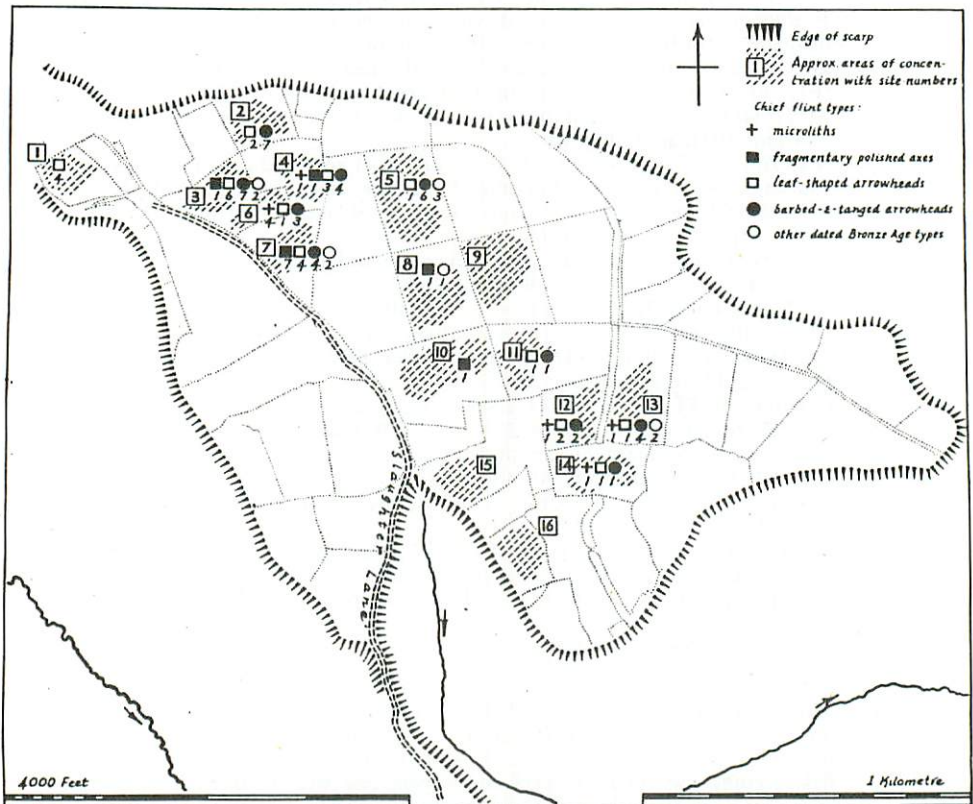


Fig. 42. Charmy Down sites. Reproduced from Grimes, 1960, with the permission of the author and H.M.S.O. Crown copyright reserved.

TABLE 1

Sites	Micro- flths		Arrowheads																Sundries			
	F	S	pa	ch	li	lz	tri	hb	t	bt	w	ty?	F	S	F	S	F	S				
I Lanadown	6		Sv	9	4	12	6		1				8	6				2				
1 Derby Point																						
Furthr. Slate	1					2							2									
2 Big Down	13	14		10	12	1	2	1	1	5	2	1							No detail			
3 Brockham				No details: small site.																		
4 The Slates	Sv	2	1*	3	6	1							2						5 pol-ah			
5 Langridge La. Micro. Site	40	1		5	4	2							1						Lance hd.1 Awia 5			
Neol. Site +		9	10	1	4				1	1			11	8								
6 Up. Langridge Fm. 30 Acre	1			1		1	2	1	1	1			6	2								
20 Acre	Sv	7	2		1			1					2	1	3							
12 Acre				4	1	1													No details			
Mushroom				5	1	1		1	1				3									
Site 4				1																		
7 Charicomba Grove	4	2	1		12	13							2	2	5			Borer 1	Saw 1	Lance hd.1		
8 Ensleigh													1		2							
9 Flock Down (1)	4	2			1				1	1			2									
(2)				G1									G1									
--Weston Lane	1	4				2									1							
--Oatland Down				2	1										2							
--Great Down	1					1																
--Cemetery Fld.															1							
II Kelston Round Hill			1			1									1							
III Freezing Hill	1	6	13	2	2	10			2				4	10				5	Awl 1 Halberd 1	1 pat Greenstone		
IV Hamswell								No details												Hammer 1		
V Henley Hill	2																				Borer 1	
VI-VIII Charmy Down				See schedule and Grimes 1960																		
IX Banner Down		2	1			1	2						1	1								
X Farleigh Down (1)		2				3	2						1	3							Hammer 1 Borer 3	
(2)	4	4	2	1	1	13	1						4	3							1 pat Greenstone	
XI Soapstone (1)	2				1	4	1	4	2				3									Spear hd. 1
(2)	3	10	6	1	1	5							1									
(3)	1	2	2	1	1				2				1	1								
(4)							1						1	1								
(5)						1							1	1								
The Glade	1				1																	Saw 2
XII Kingsdown				Falconer no details: 4 sites marked.																		
(1)			5	3	2																	
(2)			2																			
XIII Hampton Down			2					Falconer no details						1	1							
XIV Claverton Down	Sv	1	2	1	1				3				1	1								Saw 2 Borer 1
XV Coombe Down			2											1								
--Brantwood			1																			
--Inwoods (1)	1			Falconer shows on map Inwoods (1 and 2)																		
--Hartley Farm	5	5			4				4	1	9											
--Holts Down													5									
Conkwell				Falconer shows two sites on map. See schedule																		

Sv: Several G: Gardner not Falconer * Not flint + Based on post-1932
 Collections. Sites with no numbers, except Conkwell, are Shore's sites. The fields were
 unploughed in Falconer's time.

extend the areas depicted in the figure. In the following summary of S's finds Grimes' area numbers are given in []. [2] S site H. m 5, paf 6, ah-lf 4, ah-bt 10: [5, 8] S sites J and D, m 3, paf 4, ah-lf 7, ah-bt 12, ah-ch 3, ah-lz 1, ah-w 1. [10, 11] S site K. paf 1, ah-lf 1, ah-bt 1. [11] S site L. SE corner of field. Skinner's Field lies west of "S" in Slaughter Lane in Fig. 42. It is mainly a Roman site but S has found a scatter of flints including ah-ch 1, ah-lf 2.

- IX Banner Down.** (F) ST 798697, 12/8/1912. DB/1940. Subsidiary site discovered 3/10/1948. ST 802696. It is quite large.
- X Farleigh Down.** (F), (1) ST 796660, 1/3/1912. DB/1940. (2) ST 796657, 1932-34.
- XI Soapleaze.** (F) includes **Ashley Wood**. Five sites discovered 1932. Visited annually till 1938. Microliths at (1, 2, 3) and at **The Glade**. No microliths at (4, 5). (1) ST 801664, (2) ST 802664, (3) ST 804664, (4) ST 803663, (5) ST 802662, **The Glade** ST 808668.
- XII Kingsdown** (F) ST 8167, 1934. Extends over five fields on east side of north extension of golf course. There is the usual range of implements except microliths. (F) gives no details but (S) has listed a number of items. (1) ST 815673, (2) ST 816675, (3) ST 815675, (4) ST 814673.
- XIII Hampton Down.** (F) ST 771648. Just outside SW corner of Bathampton Down Camp in NW corner of field, the Searchlight Field of (S). (F) gives no details but (S) has provided a list, and he has also found flint implements, nearly all scrapers, inside the camp at site of new reservoir.
- XIV Claverton Down.** (F) ST 771635, 19/8/1911. DB/1940. Flints in many parts of large field with local concentrations. Collections were made by (F) 1932-38 and also by (S).
- XV Combe Down.** (F) ST 771626. 1932. [Not a prolific site. EKT.]
- **Brantwood.** (S) ST 742614.
 - **Inwoods** (1) (F) Noted on his map but not in his m.s. (S) has found implements here. (2) (F) ST 803633.
 - **Conkwell** (1, 2). (F) ST 792624. No details. [The sites are so close together that they are probably all part of a single site. The NGR is for the southern part. EKT.]

DISCUSSION

Falconer, Gardner and Shore have between them amassed a very considerable collection of flint implements from a large series of surface sites on the downlands around Bath. These are all sites on the higher grounds. There are no valley sites. The searchers have concentrated their attention on the uplands because over these the top soil is thin and ploughing will go deep enough to bring up the implements to the surface. In the valleys the accumulated depth of soil is such that, assuming similar flint densities exist there, ploughing would be unlikely to go deep enough to do this. In some degree the distribution mapped could therefore be misleading if interpreted incautiously. This does not belie the value of the work done but attention needs to be drawn to the sort of fallacy that can creep into distribution maps based on finds alone without regard to other factors. The area studied has been given arbitrary boundaries. It is likely that similar distributions will be found in adjacent areas with the same general topographical characters.

One such comparable area is Stow-on-the-Wold some 20 km to the north. This is the area from which the Royce Collection of flint arrowheads was obtained. It has been studied by Grinsell (1965). It is composed very largely of arrowheads and there are relatively few other implements. Selection has obviously been practised and so the collection is not truly representative of the flint industries of the areas as are the collections of F/G/S for the Bath area. Grinsell notes that both Neolithic and Bronze Age forms of implements occur on the same sites (c.f. Bath area).

Grinsell gives long lists of field names. Some of these fields are sites at which implements have been found but he comments that out of 3000 arrowheads in the Royce Collection only 500 could be allocated to individual fields. All the 430 arrowheads in the F/G/S collections, including those from Charmy Down, can be tied in to individual fields, or parts of fields. Again Grinsell has commented that some of the arrowheads came "from outside the area". Just how many did is unknown. These defects in the records and the marked selection practised force speculation as to the methods employed in getting the collection together. Grinsell notes that an unknown number of collectors was used. The F/G/S collections give us a much more complete picture not only of the distribution of settlements but also of the flint industries involved and a time range beginning in the Late Upper Palaeolithic through into the Bronze Age.

The plateau zones, on which so far all the living sites have been found, are dissected by steep-sided, narrow-bottomed valleys, which would generally be unsuitable for use by cattle keepers or for arable farming. They would tend to be areas of woodland and scrub. They would be affected by hill wash, soil creep and slumping with the likelihood of marshes and peat at the bottom. The sections described by Winwood (1897) at the site of the Monkwood Reservoir are a reminder of how much can accumulate in such a typical valley bottom from the end of the Pleistocene to the present day. This argument must not be carried too far because a very late Bronze Age hoard was found in the Monkwood valley at only 300 ft. O.D. Its presence argues for some usage of the area.

Several of the major sites of Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age date are close to water at springs that break out well up the slopes of the valleys, the position of springs being largely determined by the presence of clay beds in the Oolite sequence. The hot springs in the floor of the Avon valley may have affected settlements for the springs could easily be visited from the surrounding living sites on the uplands. In the earlier phases of occupation, with man dependent in a major way on hunting for his food supply he would, presumably have been well aware of the attraction of the springs for animals as a source of minerals, e.g. in "salt licks". In all phases it may well have been man who made most use of the springs.

Palaeolithic/Mesolithic. Falconer has commented that at a few sites some of the implements could be considered as being possibly of Late Upper Palaeolithic (LUP) date. Derby Point has provided a burin

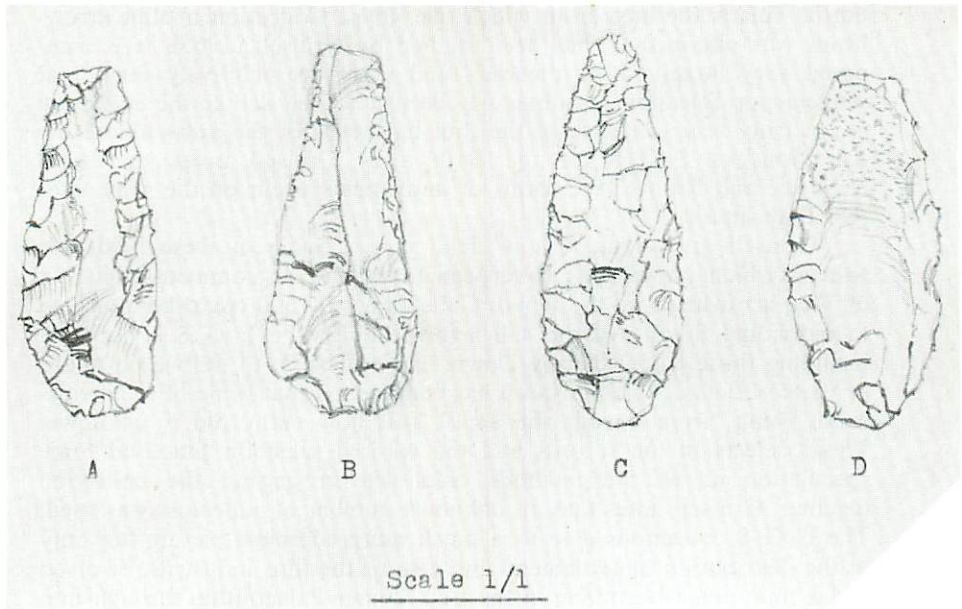


Fig. 42a. Lanceheads from the Collection of E. A. Shore. A. Derby Point, B. Charmy Down, Grimes' [5], C. The Slates, D. Further Slate.

and a piece of fossilised bone: in UBSS collection from Flock Down (M9.5(8), 1, 2) is a broken blade with a battered back and a graver. The three are probably LUP. From Claverton Down (M9.5(3), 1, 4, 5) come three blades likely to be LUP. Kelston Round Hill (F (a and b)) has yielded one battered back blade and all the other implements are coarse. Shore illustrates four points trimmed from one surface only (Fig. 42a). He has also found on Freezing Hill a typical LUP battered back blade.

Microliths occur at several sites and a Mesolithic date is proposed for them. It would seem that the sites around Bath amplify the evidence from sites elsewhere that there was no abrupt break in the Upper Palaeolithic stone industry tradition. Rather was it a continuous process of evolution, reaching back quite a long time into the Upper Palaeolithic, and subsequently influenced by changes in implement technique and design brought to the area by newcomers, who mixed with the existing population. This would certainly seem to be the case in the Mendips.

But Grimes (1960) in his study of the surface finds from Charmy Down (Fig. 42) from Falconer's collection (F VI-VIII) does not consider that microliths necessarily indicate a Mesolithic date and opines that the use of microliths continued into the Early Bronze Age and he quotes supporting evidence. Although this report was published in 1960, it was written several years earlier. The supporting evidence cited is

derived from excavation reports published considerably earlier still. Since then much more has been learnt about the Mesolithic period and the distribution of sites. Other explanations for the Microliths-Bronze Age association are more likely to be valid than the continuance of the use of microliths to this late date.

Microliths in the soil of Bronze Age barrows cannot be cited for their use at this late date unless it can be shown that the microliths were not already in the soil from which or on which the barrow was made. The North Barrow, Tynings Farm, Mendip (UBSS T10, Grinsell Cheddar 2) had microliths in the primary part of the barrow (Taylor, 1933). This is not definite evidence for their manufacture and use at the time the barrow was constructed. Furthermore the field to the east has a scatter of flint implements with types at least as early as Neolithic.

In Rowberrow Cavern (ST 46995637) microliths are recorded as coming from the thin Late Neolithic-Early Bronze Age horizon (Taylor 1926, p.201). Only one out of the 15 is described as coming from "an undisturbed deposit" of that period. The group as a whole came from all levels from 1-6 ft. Though 5 were in the critical 4th ft., 2 were unstratified, and 2 from 6th ft. Obviously there had been some disturbance and the evidence for an Early Bronze Age date for the microliths is equivocal. Disturbance also accounted for the distribution of the microliths amongst much later material at Hay Wood Cave, Mendip (Everton and Everton, 1972).

At Gorsey Bigbury (ST 484558—UBSS T186) microliths were found in the ditch infilling of this henge monument in association with the Beaker occupation material (Jones, 1938, p.23). The conclusion reached was that the microliths were contemporary with this occupation. However some of the microliths were stated to have been found in the soil of the bank. A recent field study, when the area round the henge had been freshly ploughed, produced Mesolithic flint types including typical cores, mainly from the area just south of the henge. About 300 m away to the south across a shallow valley from this henge there is a quite prolific mesolithic site (Anne Everton, personal communication). Of the two microliths from Gorsey Bigbury which survived 1940, only one is a true microlith; the other is a spall from another implement.

In summary, then, the evidence for a microlithic flint industry in the Early Bronze Age is unsound and the idea should be abandoned.

There remains the problem of the multiplicity of sites, a problem that is not unique for the Bath Downs. The impression gained is of a relatively large population in proportion to that represented by the Mendip cave sites of LUP date. No open sites either on Mendip or the Bath Downs have been proved for certain. But there is sufficient evidence to show that the Bath Downs were at least visited by the hunter/food gatherers of the LUP. Some increase in population can be accepted as axiomatic and probably attributable to the fresh arrivals from the continent and the improving ecological conditions of the region.

The period covered by the Mesolithic was not less than 3000 years and may have been close to 4000. There is no incontrovertible evidence as to whether the sites were all in use together, or successively or

whether they were permanently, seasonally or only occasionally occupied. The slender evidence available does not suggest permanent use.

Neolithic/Bronze Age. Little can be said about this long period as implement types common to both ages occur on the same sites. Careful area excavations might provide the necessary data from which deductions could be drawn. The schedule and table does suggest that some sites are predominantly Neolithic and others Bronze Age though this is based solely on the relative numbers of types of arrowheads. Not a very safe criterion. UBSS holds implements from Upper Langridge Farm (M9.5(14)) and this group does seem to be purely Neolithic in typology. On the other hand the distribution diagram (Fig. 42) of sites on Charmy Down makes one wonder if any further breakdown of sites into periods is possible. All the same an attempt should be made by a detailed study of the whole of the collections.

The arguments already given about multiplicity of Mesolithic sites are equally applicable to those of the later periods.

SOURCE OF THE FLINT

Falconer has claimed that the majority of the implements were made from local "Tertiary" flint and conversely that flint obtained, presumably by some form of trade, from Cretaceous areas to the south and east was unimportant. A study of the collections does not support the theory of local derivation but the reverse. It would seem that the flint was brought in as nodules, some of which have been found, and this is borne out by the evidence at many of the sites of manufacturing waste such as cores and flakes.

A secondary source, though relatively small, was broken flint axes. At least one must assume that they were broken if used for raw material in the Neolithic but this would not apply in the Bronze Age.

The degree of patination is generally uniform. The implements present a dense white deep patina. This is to be expected in view of the thinness of the soil and therefore the ease of oxidation of the flints.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The time range of the sites appears to begin with the Late Upper Palaeolithic and continuing, possibly without a break, into the Mesolithic. No gap in the sequence has been proved between the Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Ages. The total period covered ranges from around 8000 BC to about 1000 BC. There is no evidence for absolute continuity of use of any one or a combination of sites.

2. The main source of the flint for the implements were the Cretaceous areas to the south and east. Some form of trading is indicated. Polished flint axes were utilised as a secondary source of raw material for other implements.

3. The collections illustrate admirably what can be achieved by persistent collecting over a period coupled with accurate recording of sites. The material still needs to be studied in detail, particularly the vast number of scrapers, though Grimes' work on Charmy Down sites suggests that this will not yield spectacular results.

4. At the very least these collections demonstrate that the highland areas around Bath were exploited by man from the end of the Pleistocene onwards.

5. Area excavation of selected sites might provide material for their closer dating and it is possible that house sites might be found demarcated by postholes and ditches.

6. This paper has dealt only with a limited area. Sites beyond these limits are known so there is good reason for believing that adjacent areas were also occupied but the field work is far from complete.

7. There is no evidence that a microlithic industry existed in the Early Bronze Age.

8. Burial sites that can be attributed to the Neolithic/Bronze Ages have not been dealt with in this paper.

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