

I.

NOTES ON FLINT AND OTHER IMPLEMENTS FOUND NEAR SELKIRK. BY J. B. MASON, F.S.A.Scot.

Through the courtesy of the farmers in the vicinity of Selkirk, the writer has had the opportunity of searching many of their fields, in winter and early spring, for relics of the Stone Age and later periods.

Lauriston Scaurs, Howden Farm.—The first find was made two or three years ago at Lauriston Scaurs, a beautiful spot about a mile south-west of the town. There, on a field above Ettrick Water, was found a fine arrow-head of the barbed type formed of chalcedony and measuring $1\frac{1}{8}$ inch in length; it is a splendid example of neolithic craftsmanship. At the opposite end of the field a leaf-shaped arrow-head of black flint was picked up, as also a large scraper of the same material but brown in colour, of a size unusual for the district, measuring $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length and $1\frac{1}{8}$ inch in breadth. In addition this field has yielded several scrapers and cores of flint and green chert, as well as a perforated adze-like implement and an anvil-stone. On the heights which dominate this field and adjoin Howden Hill, several scrapers, a broken knife, and the fragment of an arrow-head, all of flint, have been picked up. The lower field has also yielded objects of a later period, a village known as Lauriston having stood here.¹ These relics include fragments of mediæval pottery, a silver penny of Henry III., London Mint, two lead whorls, several seventeenth-century coins in poor condition, some gun flints, and an elfin pipe-head of a very early type. One of the lead whorls is biconical in section, and shows on both

¹ T. Craig-Brown, *History of Selkirkshire*, vol. ii. p. 162.

faces five groups of three pellets, each group separated by a short radiating straight line. It measures $1\frac{1}{8}$ inch in diameter and $\frac{3}{8}$ inch in thickness.

South Common Farm.—This farm in parts rises to 800 feet above sea-level, and has yielded relics of occupation in early times. In the vicinity of a well which lies in a field north-west of Selkirk racecourse, a knife of red-coloured flint and a scraper of chalcedony have been picked up. At the lower end of the field two arrow-heads of the barbed type, several flakes, cores, and scrapers, and two pigmy implements were secured. A portion of a jet armlet was also found in this part of the field.

Following the path which leads to the racecourse we reach a flat field which looks to the south. On it several fine tools have been found, such as a leaf-shaped arrow-head, a fine-pointed implement like a knife, and two pigmy implements of green chert. On the lower part of the field relics were scarcer, and a large hollow shows signs of having been under water at one time.

Smedheugh Farm.—The farm of this name lies within two miles of Selkirk to the south-east, and rises to 943 feet above the level of the sea. South-east of the farm-house there is a marsh, and artefacts have been found in the adjoining fields. These consist of cores and flakes of flint and chert, and a few implements. Two barbed arrow-heads were recovered on the heights which rise to the north side of the marsh, and one of the leaf-shaped type almost at the edge of the water. The field to the south of the marsh, which is bounded by the high road to St Boswells, has also yielded a few flakes and cores, and a hollow scraper of reddish-coloured chert.

On the same farm, in fields which lie to the south-east of Selkirk rifle-range, several implements have been picked up with the usual cores and chips. Two horseshoe-shaped scrapers, a large pointed implement of flint, a duckbill-shaped scraper of the same material, various flakes showing signs of use, two fragments of whetstones, a section of a jet armlet, a spindle whorl of the shale common to the district, which measures $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch in outside diameter, and a hammer-stone of quartzite, which shows signs of pitting on both faces and sides, make up the list of objects found.

Greenhead Farm.—The adjoining farm of Greenhead, where the Bell Hill Fort is situated, has also supplied evidence of the fabrication of stone implements within its bounds. On a ridge which lies within a few yards of the fort, three flint scrapers, two knives and several flakes and cores have been found, as also a piece of whinstone showing pitting, which might have been used as an anvil- or hammer-stone.

Near the north end of this field a section of a jet armlet with a hole bored in it was recovered. The whole of this part of the farm seems at one time to have been covered with marshes and rocky ridges rising therefrom. On these ridges the stone relics are found.

The north-east part of this farm which adjoins the Shawmount road is also worthy of notice. A finely worked arrow-head of the leaf-shaped type was found near a small hollow containing water, and on an eminence above, several tools, such as a knife of flint, a saw of chalcedony, a borer, a small scraper, and the usual quantity of flakes and cores. A section of a tool like a fabricator for flaking flint by pressure was found in this area.

Taking this area all over and the labour involved in searching, the result is somewhat disappointing, but still sufficient evidence has been obtained to prove the existence of an early settlement by man.

On all the sites already mentioned, as elsewhere in the county of Selkirk, the proportion of debris to worked pieces of flint and chert is very large. It should be noted that green chert is found in larger quantities than flint, which doubtless is accounted for by the former material being found locally, and having been more often used by the workers of stone implements in the area.

Greenhill Farm.—The farm of Greenhill lies about three miles to the south of Selkirk, and rises in some places to more than 900 feet above sea level; it includes two marshes which seem to have been much larger in earlier times. On the heights that dominate these morasses and on their margins several relics have been found. Three leaf-shaped arrow-heads were got beside the marsh which lies to the east side of the farm-house, one of them having a groove on the surface nearest the blunt end. A large knife of flint, several scrapers, and various worked flints and cores, point to tools having been made in the area. A curious square-shaped pounding-stone of whinstone, and a neat anvil-stone of the same material were also recovered.

Crossing the Lilliesleaf road and following the ridge which runs parallel with the Hawick road, we reach a larger marsh. Here again we find the usual debris of flakes and cores with a few tools, amongst which a fine horseshoe-shaped scraper, a leaf-shaped arrow-head, and a borer are worth noting.

On the hilltops half a mile south another site exists on which a finely shaped barbed and serrated arrow-head was found last year. It is of flint, and near it I picked up a knife and two scrapers.

The fields overlooking the east side of a small loch known as Hare-moss Loch on the Selkirk to Hawick road have yielded about twenty implements. One tiny arrow-head of the barbed pattern has been

almost destroyed by fire. The other tools collected are the usual borers, scrapers, and knives, with three pigmy flints, and an oblong-shaped piece of whinstone which seems to have been used as a polisher.

Whitlaw Farm.—In a triangular field at the Halfcrown Corner, which adjoins this farm, three fine tools were found quite close together. The most notable is a knife of flint measuring $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches in length and $\frac{7}{8}$ inch in breadth. The others are a small dome-shaped scraper, and a large one of the horseshoe type.

In January 1925, I examined the fields that encircle Whitlaw Hill, an elevation 1059 feet high, and there I found a few fragments of flint and chert on the lower area, which is bounded on the south-west by an impassable morass.

Nearer the top of the hill I picked up a small quartz polisher made by grinding down one end of a small pebble, and similar to specimens found at Dryburgh.¹ A small whetstone was also found here. Almost on the summit of the hill I noticed, in a furrow, a large black object like a piece of bottle glass. On picking it up I was surprised to find it to be a section of a jet armlet of unusual size. As no armlet approaching it in breadth seems to have been found in Scotland I have handed it over to our National Museum. In my collection there are several fragments of jet armlets but their depth never exceeds $\frac{3}{4}$ inch, while the depth of this one measures $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch. The outside has been finely polished. Two arrow-heads of chert were found on this site, one a small leaf-shaped specimen finely made, and the other the only barbed arrow-head of this material which I have found in the district. Unfortunately the stem is broken. It is interesting to report the discovery of pigmy flints in this area, one being of flint and the other of green chert. Two broken whetstones were also found.

Pitchstone.—On all the sites mentioned, fragments of pitchstone have been found, although the material is rare. The largest piece showing signs of working is a knife-like flake which measures $1\frac{7}{16}$ inch in length. This implement was found on the farm of South Common near Selkirk racecourse. A core from Smedheugh Farm measuring $\frac{9}{16}$ inch in length has evidently been used as a scraper. One or two of the other fragments of this material show signs of working but most of them must be classed as cores and flakes.

The sites described in this article can almost be included in an area four miles square. All the farms, with the exception of Howden which lies on the Ettrick Water, occupy the bleak moorlands to the south and east of Selkirk. They adjoin each other and present the same features

¹ *Proceedings*, vol. xlviii. p. 339.

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of bare hilltops broken here and there by little marshes or lochs. Dreary though they appear to-day, they have given us unmistakable proof of man's presence on them in remote times.