

Shorter notes

Mesolithic occupation at Castlehill of Strachan, Kincardine and Deeside

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The excavation of the medieval motte of Castlehill of Strachan (Kincardine and Deeside District) in 1980 and 1981 (Yeoman 1984) produced slight but clear evidence of a Mesolithic presence on the site. A total of 13 pieces of flint was recovered but only seven of these could be said to be flaked pieces and these were classified as follows:

Microburin, proximal type, notch RHS	1
Snapped blade (proximal and distal)	1
Other retouched piece (unclassified).....	1
Flakes (tertiary)	4.

The raw material was all pebble flint with a yellow or mid grey patina. Details of classification and context are in the National Monuments Record of Scotland.

Little can be said about such a limited assemblage. The flakes are small and irregular, but on the basis of the presence of a microburin and a snapped blade it is suggested that the whole group is Mesolithic in date. All the material was residual, with no flint being recovered from the undated 'pre-occupation soil' identified by the excavator (*ibid*, 319). Since approximately 50% of the motte top was excavated and this area only produced seven flints it is likely that the total quantity of flint originally deposited was very small and may represent no more than a single visit to the site.

The motte itself is a natural mound of sand and gravel lying in the valley of the River Feugh, forming a natural island in the medieval period (*ibid*, 316-17), and the site would have provided an attractive location to a local Mesolithic population exploiting the local riverine resources. However, it was clearly not a favoured occupation site on the present archaeological evidence, and the small size of the assemblage does not facilitate comparison with local Mesolithic sites (Paterson & Lacaille 1936)

REFERENCES

- Paterson, H M L & Lacaille, A D 1936 'Banchory microliths', *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, 70 (1935-6), 419-34.
Yeoman, P A 1984 'Excavations at Castlehill of Strachan, 1980-81' *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, 114 (1984), 315-64, fiche 4:C1-G3.

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