
8 The Cnoc Dubh quarry and future comparative work

As part of the investigation of the prehistoric quartz quarry at Cnoc Dubh, the author intended to compare the site with other Scottish procurement sites. It was thought that, in an attempt to define attributes diagnostic of quartz quarrying, and to understand the on-site organisation of the procurement process, comparison with other Scottish quarry sites might be relevant. However, many lithic outcrops have been visited repeatedly by geologists and amateur knappers (eg, the Arran pitchstone outcrops and the baked mudstone seam above the An Corran site on Skye) and, today, it would probably be

impossible to distinguish between modern pick-axe marks and prehistoric impact points (in his presentation of a chalcedony quarry in Nova Scotia, Michael Deal writes: ‘ . . . decades of visitations by geologists and rockhounds have resulted in the defacement of the bedded deposits by metal picks . . . ’ [Deal 1989]). It is therefore the author’s hope that the Cnoc Dubh quarry will in some way be protected, thus making future comparative analyses possible. The matter of scheduling is presently being considered by Historic Scotland.