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THE Tog Hill Chipping Site (N.G.R. ST.738735), was discovered early in 1959 by Keith Marochan and Kenneth Reid and again, independently, by the writers in 1961. Messrs Reid and Marochan have generously allowed their finds to be included in this report. The whole collection has since been given to Bristol City Museum.

To stand on the escarpment of Tog Hill on a clear day is an impressive experience. To the north-west is a wide valley, across which can be seen the ridge which carries the Bristol–Gloucester road. Beyond this, across the Severn estuary, the view extends far into the Welsh hills. To the west can be seen the ridge which runs from the Avon Gorge to the Bristol Channel at Clevedon, 21 miles away. At the foot of the escarpment are the springs, now mostly piped, which drew to this spot both prehistoric folk and the game they hunted.

On the debit side, the climate at this elevation (600–700 feet O.D.) is much more severe than in the valley below, and no doubt our forerunners found it so. There is, in fact, reason to think that the site was visited only in warm weather. Near the south-western side of Field 6, just below the 600-foot contour line, there is a fairly large patch of darker soil where excavation might be profitable; but elsewhere, ploughing reveals only barren subsoil. Nowhere was there any evidence of hearths and, of the 1,148 pieces of flint dealt with in this report, only six are fire-crackled.

The spread of flints over the area shown on the map (FIG. 1) is partly due to modern cultivation; there were no patches of concentration such as would result from certain spots being occupied for more than a short time.

We assume, then, that the site was visited annually over a long

period. By far the greater part of the material is Mesolithic but, as we shall see, there is an indeterminable percentage of more recent work, the most emphatic elements of which are ten Neolithic-Bronze Age arrow-heads, a plano-convex knife and two fragments struck from polished axeheads.

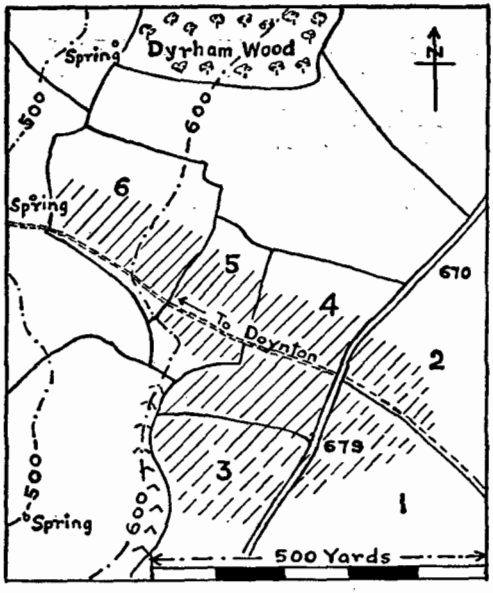

Fig. 1. *Crown copyright reserved*

Fortunately, the site appears to have been undiscovered till 1959, so that the assemblage has not been thrown out of balance by modern flint-collectors. No piece with secondary working or showing the slightest sign of use has been rejected. The amount of waste material, discarded only after careful examination, is several times greater than that retained.

The Finds

Before discussion, the following terms need definition:—

Micro-blades are parallel-sided blades ¼ inch or less in width struck from the parent core by indirect percussion, usually called punch-technique (Nos. 8, 9 and 10).

Blades are similar, but are ¼ to ½ inch wide (nos. 14, 15 and 16).

Flakes are ½ to 1 inch or more wide (nos. 29, 30 and 31).

Microliths are blades or micro-blades which have had part of one or more sides blunted, the secondary working being at right-angles to the bulbar face. With a few exceptions (nos. 18 and 19) they conform to known types.

Points. Some of the smaller points are identical with microliths in outline, but the secondary working, known as 'trimming' is at an angle of 45 degrees or less to the bulbar face.

The Total Assemblage is as follows:—

		Patination			
		Dense	*Slight*	*Nil*	*Re-used*
72	Cores	3	20	42	7
14	Possible core-gravers	2	4	8	
9	Core trimmings	1	5	3	
76	Micro-blades, little or no use ...	7	27	42	
58	Blades, little or no use	1	16	40	1
70	Flakes with slight use	2	14	53	1
1	Battered-back blade	1			
33	Obliquely blunted points, Type A1	4	10	19	
4	Obliquely blunted points, Type A2	2	1	1	
22	Blunted along one edge, Type B1 ...	9	8	4	1
2	Tanged microliths			1	1
2	Sub-triangles		1	1	
1	Rhomboid			1	
1	Rod			1	
18	Broken or atypical microliths ...	2	6	10	
7	Micro-burins	3	1	3	
25	Truncated blades	1	5	19	
74	Blades snapped at one end ...	4	19	51	
32	Blades snapped at both ends ...	6	12	14	
33	Blades snapped and trimmed ...	3	4	26	
49	Points on blades	3	7	39	
141	Points on flakes	4	18	119	
109	Points on thick flakes	4	88	15	2
22	Gravers	2	1	18	1
8	Transverse arrowheads		1	7	
1	Axe-trimming flake			1	
112	Scrapers	11	21	73	7
13	Hollow scrapers		4	8	1
7	Serrated flakes	3	1	3	
2	Punches			2	
8	Hammer stones			8	
110	Various used pieces	5	11	90	4
10	Arrowheads			8	2
1	Awl			1	
1	Plano-convex knife				1
1,148					

Material. The flint is all of good, but not best quality, and ranges in colour from white, through all shades of grey to dense black; only two pieces of honey-coloured flint were found. Chert is completely absent.

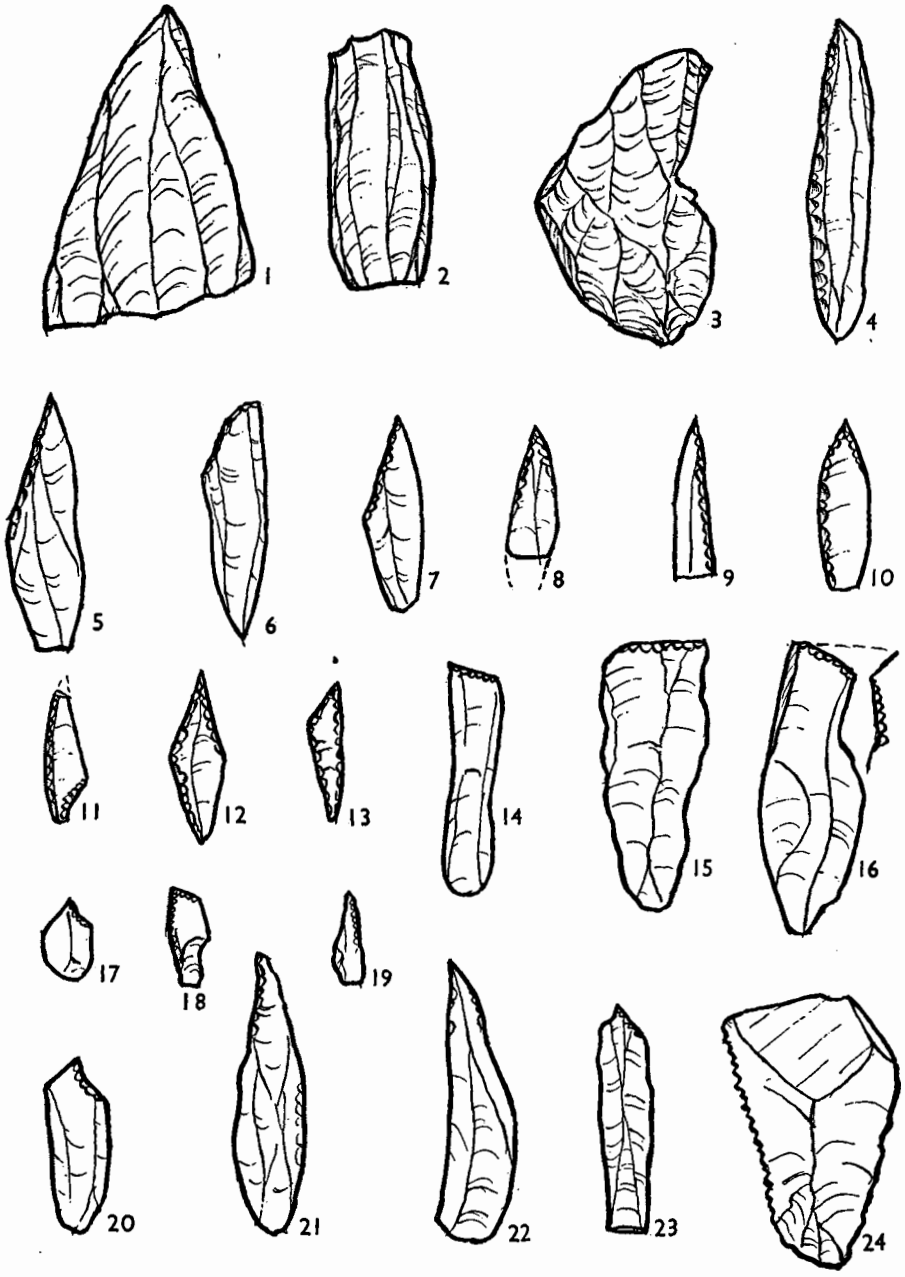

Fig. 2. Flints from Tog Hill (½)

Patination gives no clue to comparative dates of the implements. A few tools which are definitely Mesolithic have patination which is broken through by part of the secondary working. This is usually thought to result from their having been rediscovered on the site but, in the absence of cultivation, it is hard to see how this could happen.

Cores. It is not possible to sort all the cores into Mesolithic types. Their shape, in many cases, depends on that of the original nodule; which was often small and not of particularly good quality flint. An exception to this is the cylindrical core (no. 2) which is of extra good quality and has been used to the fullest extent. Recognizable cores of this type, together with the conical (no. 1) and the 'tea-cosy', are outnumbered by the rougher specimens. As on most Mesolithic sites, all the cores are much shorter than the longest flakes.

Core trimmings, removed for the preparation of new striking-platforms, have the effect of shortening the cores, but very few were found.

Core-gravers. Modern opinion treats these with some suspicion. We have 14 cores, similar to no. 3, which could have been used as gravers without further preparation.

Micro-blades, blades and flakes showing little or no signs of use number just over 200. This prodigality of material from which microliths, points and other small tools could have been made is typically Mesolithic.

Micro-burins. The micro-burin is a waste product left when a blade has been notched and snapped in the process of making a microlith. It came more commonly from the butt-end since, if the tip of a blade had to be blunted, it was easy to do so without snapping off the end. Most of our microliths of types A and B have had the butt-end of the blade removed, so that it is surprising that only 7 micro-burins were found. Two are shown (Nos. 17 and 20).

Microliths. Of the 68 complete microliths, 65 are of non-geometric type. This includes the single rhomboid, no. 12, which is a 'sophisticated' version of the obliquely-blunted point (nos. 5, 6 and 7). No. 6 is one of six on which the blunted edge is curved. The rod, and the elongated triangles (no. 13) call for no special comment at this point.

The two tanged variants of Type B are interesting because on one of them (no. 11) the blunting which forms the tang, unlike the rest of this specimen, is unpatinated.

It is tempting to think that no 4, the battered-back blade, is a hunter's loss from pre-Mesolithic times, not only because of its form, but also because it is the most densely patinated of all the 1,148 flints. The white patination has, in fact, become slightly soil-stained.

Truncated blades such as nos. 14, 15 and 16, have been found on other sites, such as Middlezoy in Somerset and Dozmary Pool in Cornwall (I). They are worked to a stout point, usually formed at an angle of 90 degrees. Such points would have been used, not of course for penetration, but for scoring hard surfaces or for cutting or marking skins—that is, as miniature gravers.

Snapped and trimmed blades differ from truncated blades in that only a minimum of retouch has been applied, in order to remove a sharp edge left when the blade was snapped.

Blades snapped at one end number 75, and we assume that a proportion of these were snapped intentionally. Since no sharp edges were left no trimming was needed;

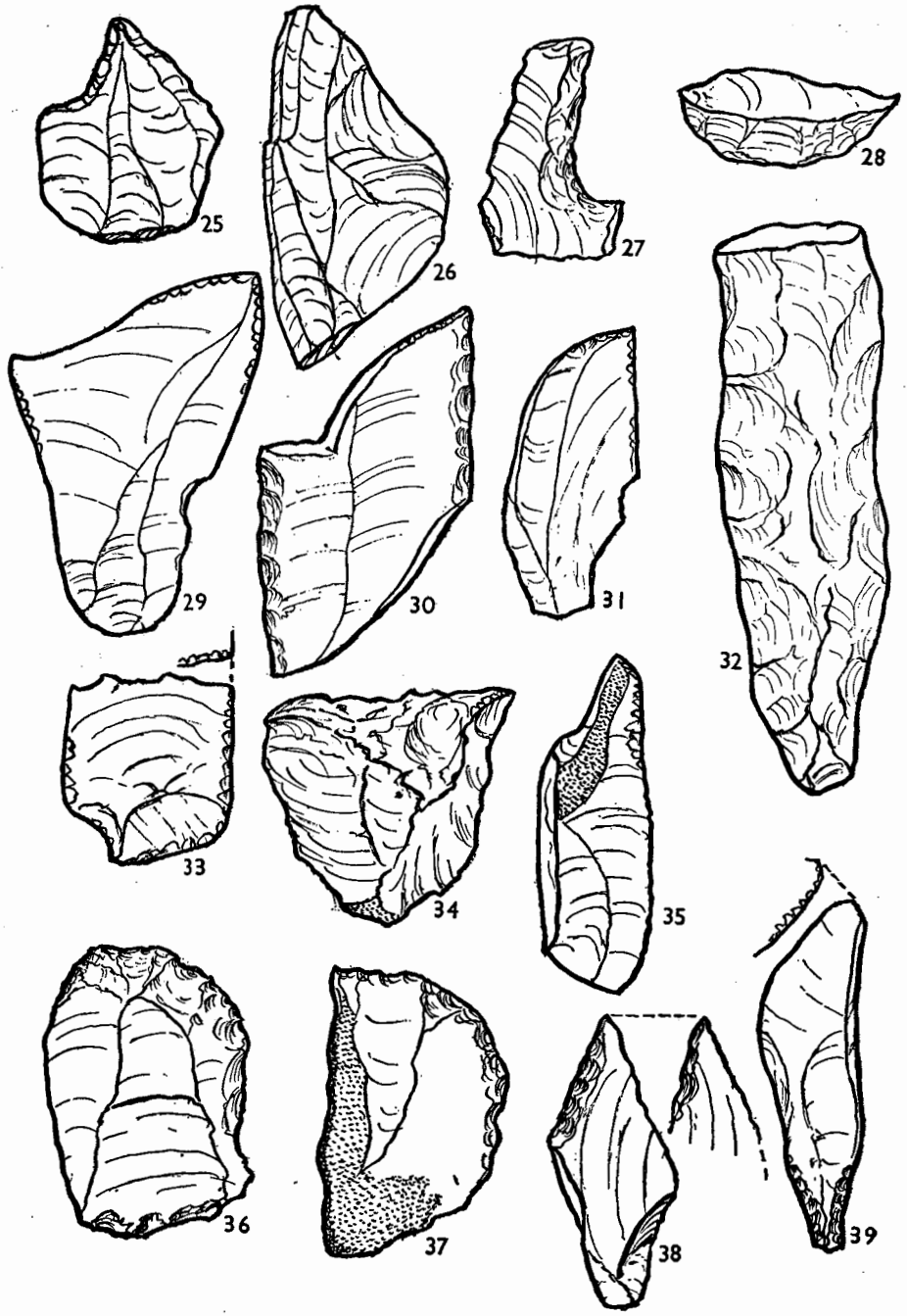

Fig. 3. Flints from Tog Hill (½)

the shortened blade was the equivalent of a carefully-worked truncated blade. Butts outnumber broken-off tips by two to one.

Blades snapped at both ends are numerous on many Mesolithic sites (II) and are usually termed 'segmented'.

We may comment here that to snap micro-blades at right-angles all that is needed is to press the tip against a hard surface. With stouter blades, this pressure has to be supplemented by tapping. Thick blades and flakes can be snapped only by a blow of some violence and this tends to produce a shattered edge rather than a clean break. (See nos. 30, 33 and the transverse arrowheads nos. 42, 43, 45–7).

Points on blades are found on most Mesolithic sites, but usually in much smaller numbers than here. They are not awls, because they show no sign of having been used in a rotary manner. (Our single awl, no. 38, may well be of Neolithic—Bronze Age date). Of the three specimens drawn, no. 21 is carefully worked, but no. 22 shows nothing except slight signs of use. No. 23 is unique because it is worked on the butt-end of a blade; the trimmed edge cuts through the bulb of percussion.

Points on flakes number no less than 141 and, since they outnumber all other types, we cannot dismiss them as 'tools of the moment'—which some of them no doubt are. They were easy to prepare, raw material was at hand, and it mattered little if they were mislaid, once their immediate purpose had been served. On the other hand some of them, such as no. 29, have been trimmed with some care. No. 31, another well-trimmed specimen, is one of six which curve towards the point. No. 30 is typical of 27 which are worked on snapped blades. No. 39 has a point showing slight signs of use, but the opposite end has been carefully hafted—the only example found on the site.

Points on thick flakes. Like the previous two groups, these may be either well made (no. 33) or merely adaptations of chance shapes with a minimum of secondary working (no. 34). They may be sharp (no. 35), or the trimmed edges may meet at an angle of 90 degrees (no. 33).

Transverse arrowheads. All eight specimens are drawn, and of these nos. 40 and 44 may be Neolithic, if we assess them by the fact that the flake-scars on their sides come over on to the upper surface of the flake. No. 42 has one side carefully trimmed, but the other is blunted by snapping. Four of the others have had both sides formed by snapping, and little attempt has been made to trim these rough edges. Seven of the eight have had their forward edge sharpened by slight retouch, usually on the bulbar surface. The retouch on no. 45 is bolder, so that this specimen looks like part of a scraper.

It is interesting to compare these arrowheads with those shown in Fig. 5 of the Downton report (IV).

Gravers. Nos. 25 and 52 can be closely matched at Thatcham (III). No. 26 has some resemblance to a saddle-core but is, in fact, made on a thick flake; the side illustrated has been carefully dressed, but that not shown retains much cortex. Nos. 48–50 are made on carefully prepared flakes. Most of the 22 specimens are unpatinated but no. 53 from which four sharpening-flakes have been detached, has dense white patination.

The Axe-sharpening flake (no. 28) is, even more emphatically than the gravers, in the Maglemosian tradition.

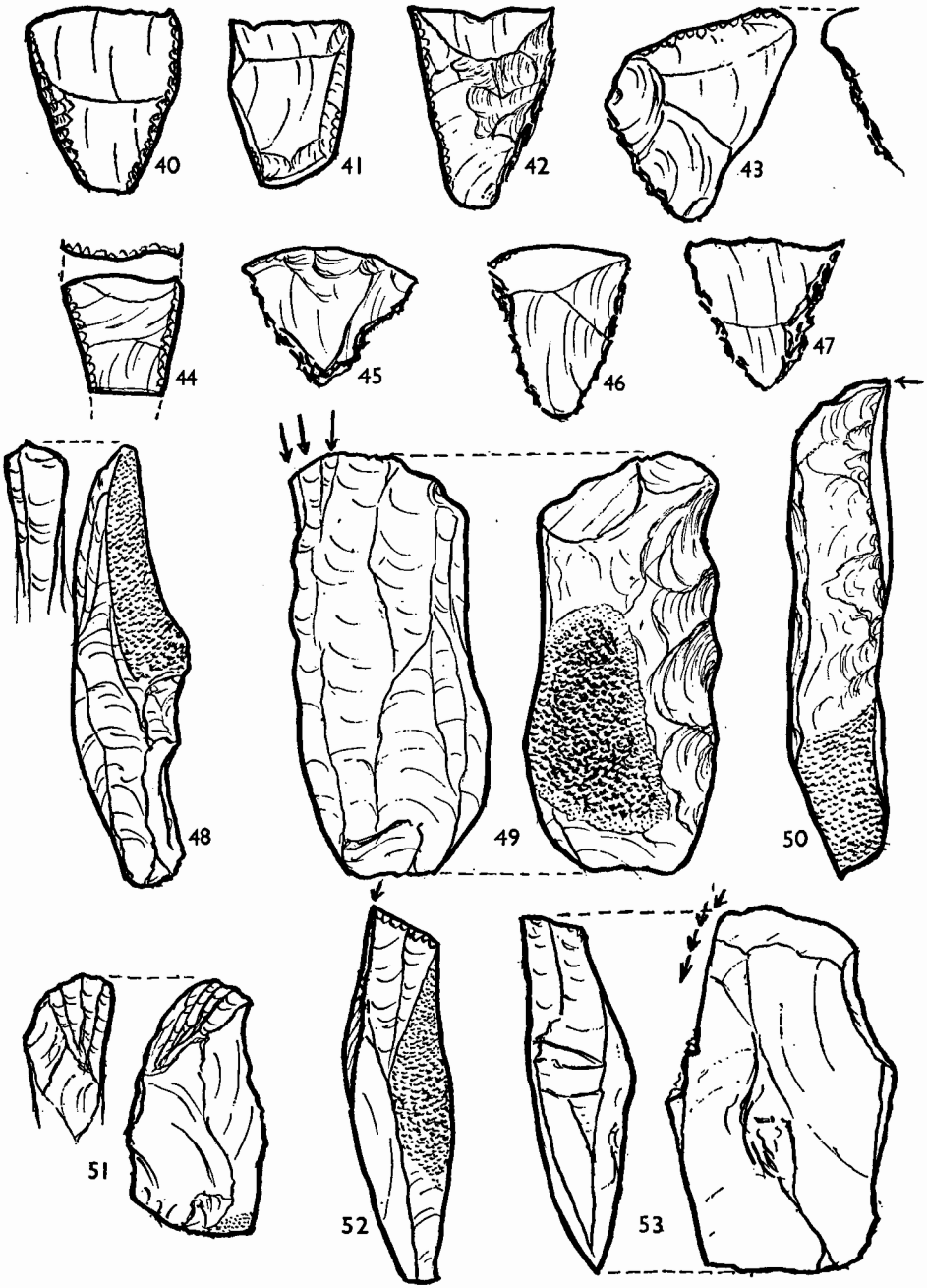

Fig. 4. Flints from Tog Hill (½)

Of the remaining implements listed, the *scrapers* (nos. 36 and 37), hollow scrapers (no. 27), the *serrated flakes* (no. 24) and *punches* (no. 32) cannot be closely dated, but may be Mesolithic. The scrapers vary both in size and workmanship. A few of the better-made specimens seem to be definitely of later date.

The *arrowheads*, the *awl* and the *plano-convex* knife are post-Mesolithic. Nine of the arrow-heads are Neolithic types, one is barbed and tanged.

Other Finds in the Area

Three miles south of Tog Hill, across the Somerset border, microliths and two micro-burins have been found on Lansdown (VI). They come from fields where more recent flints are found, and the microliths are mostly geometric or sub-geometric. Captain H. S. Gracie has found microliths in a similar context in the Tetbury-Nailsworth area, but his collection contains both geometric and non-geometric types (VII).

Discussion

In common with most Mesolithic sites, Tog Hill shows considerable waste of material, good blades and flakes having been discarded with little, or no signs of wear. There seems, also, to have been indifference to the loss of finished tools. From this carelessness the tranchet axe was exempt, perhaps because its size made it less liable to be mislaid, and almost certainly because the work entailed in its manufacture enhanced its value.

The finding of an axe-sharpening flake was therefore fortunate, because it is the tranchet axe which helps us to identify industries which are in the Maglemosian tradition (V). Other diagnostic elements are the non-geometric microliths and the gravers.

In contrast, Sauveterrian industries yield a wide variety of microliths of geometric shapes, such as triangles and crescents, the uses of which are still unknown. As both cultures were roughly contemporary in Britain, it would be strange if there were no traces of overlapping.

We have already remarked that two of the gravers can be matched at Thatcham (III), an excavated site which has been dated by radiocarbon analysis at roughly 8000 B.C. Typologically, however, the nearest parallel to Tog Hill is the site at Downton (IV) which was described by Dr E. S. Higgs as Late Mesolithic, chiefly because of the increased use of transverse arrowheads.

It is difficult to account for the almost complete absence of burnt flints, even if we were rash enough to assume that the more permanent homes of these people were in the river-valley below Tog Hill. Had this been so, the flint-chipping would have been carried on down there.

Non-geometric microliths were used as barbs for missiles and were held in place by a mastic made by heating rolls of birch bark. We also know that food-gathering groups wandered annually from place to place, probably covering greater distances than we are willing to admit, so that our distribution-maps may often show, not permanent migrations, but seasonal movements. The tools and weapons made and used on any one site depended on the requirements of the moment. At Downton, which was a riverside site, only three gravers were found; we can assume the need for them was small. The number found at Tog Hill is unusually large, especially if we include the core-gravers.

Conclusion

Tog Hill is mainly a Mesolithic site where occupation, probably in summer, was most intense late in the period and was in the Maglemosian tradition. The profusion of worked and/or used 'points' indicates some activity which remains unknown and for which we can find no published or unpublished parallel, though similar tools are found in smaller numbers on many Mesolithic sites.

Neolithic–Bronze Age use of the site seems to have been comparatively slight.

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