

6 Lithic Material by T Pollard

Three pieces of struck stone were recovered from the excavation of the Bronze Age cists at Ferndale. One is a small leaf-shaped point or arrowhead and the other two are waste flakes (débitage).

6.1 Results

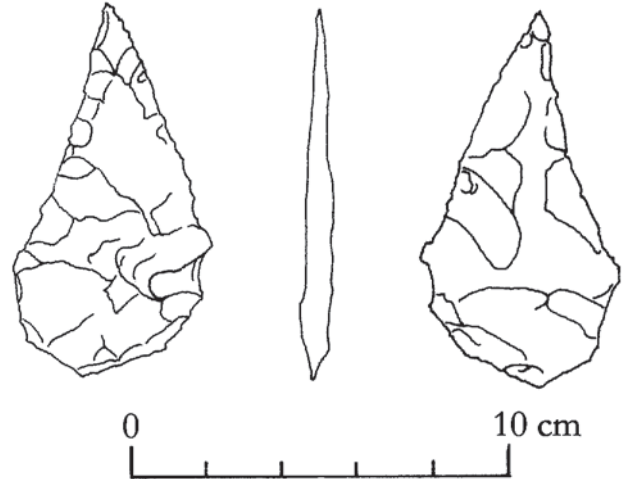
SF2 (Topsoil, context 001) opaque grey flint. Bifacially worked point (24mm × 13mm × 2.5mm). Quite narrow, 'ogival' form with slightly pronounced shoulders. One leading edge slightly concave. Butt irregularly curved. Very delicate edge trimming, indirect pressure flaking from opposite sides resulting in characteristic ripple effect in edge profile, Neolithic 'leaf shaped-arrowhead' in fine, unrolled condition (surprising given its context) (*Illus 4*).

SF3 (Fill of cut for cist 010, context 012) chalcedony. Débitage, irregular inner fragment/chunk (13mm × 7 mm × 3.5mm).

SF4 (Mound material, context 014) chalcedony. Débitage, possible core trimming fragment (17.5mm × 17mm × 2.5mm) – from overhanging edge of striking platform, displays vestigial flake/blade removal/edge roughing scars along platform edge.

6.2 Discussion

All of the pieces came from secondary contexts within the redeposited soils around and over the cists, although the keen edges and lack of rolling suggest that they have not suffered much in the way of post-depositional abrasion. The leaf-shaped point is small and finely worked, displaying some skill in its manufacture. The very small size is possibly indicative of the scarcity of reasonably sized pebbles of raw material, although there may also be a functional explanation for this. A close parallel is the ogival arrowhead, very slightly smaller in size, from beneath the Bronze Age barrow at Mousland, Stromness (*Downes 1994*). The two pieces of débitage provide little evidence for period or technology, although the



Illus 4 SF2: Leaf-shaped point or arrowhead

possible platform trimming piece does suggest that chalcedony was available in pebbles big enough to create platform cores.

Given their secondary context, it is possible that all of the pieces are contemporary, with the leaf-shaped point giving them a probable early to middle Neolithic provenance. The incorporation of soil deposits containing lithics into later funerary monuments is not unusual, especially in the case of early Neolithic material on Bronze Age burial sites (eg *Lelong & Pollard 1998*). During the Bronze Age, the creation of the funerary space and monument quite often appears to have included a deliberate process of redeposition and reincorporating residues of past activity into the ritually controlled domain of the dead, though the motives for this may have varied (*Lelong & Pollard 1998*). Keeping this in mind, it seems most likely, especially given their small size, that the deposition of the lithics was an incidental by-product of this process, resulting from the objects being present in soil deposits imported from elsewhere, rather than a deliberate deposition of the lithics themselves.