13. Researching the Prehistory of Wensleydale, Swaledale and Teesdale

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Summary

No account of the prehistory of Wensleydale, Swaledale or Teesdale exists, for the reasons perhaps that access to the moorland grouse preserves has hitherto been difficult and no university has been sufficiently interested in these rather remote (from them) districts. Wensleydale is at the northern limit of the region considered habitable during the late glacial and the small surface collection of lithic artefacts of Late Upper Palaeolithic character from Carperby Moor is described here for the first time. The Later Mesolithic and Neolithic lithic finds from Wensleydale arising from previous and recent fieldwork are placed on record. One area with widespread lithic scatters of Mesolithic and Neolithic character, Preston Moor, is in imminent danger of destruction from quarrying activity. The recently recognised burnt mounds are described in context with the rock art and the round barrows, stone circles, ring cairns and cairnfields which have not been considered previously.

Key words: Mesolithic, Neolithic, Palaeolithic, prehistoric monuments, Wensleydale, Swaledale, Teesdale

Introduction

This paper will outline a personal archaeological reconnaissance of the uplands between the Rivers Ure, Swale and Tees (Fig.59) which commenced with the recognition of the first cup-and-ring marked rock on Barningham Moor more than 30 years ago. Of course I have not worked alone and I have received advice and encouragement from very many individuals interested in all aspects of the landscape of these Pennine Dales. Throughout this reconnaissance I have been encouraged by those professional archaeologists whose responsibilities included the formal recording and protection of monuments and fossil landscapes.

I had the good fortune to have worked with Andrew Fleming for a period of ten years from 1984 in mapping the later prehistoric landscape of Swaledale within the Swaledale Ancient Land Boundaries Project.

This paper is concerned with human activity and occupation across the study area at different periods before the Roman occupation. The evidence will be presented in the form of distribution maps with a related gazetteer. Many sites have been introduced or described elsewhere, for example the lithic evidence for the early post glacial and Mesolithic occupation of Teesdale and Swaledale (Coggins *et al.* 1989) and the later prehistoric landscape of Swaledale in the vicinity of Reeth by Andrew Fleming (Fleming 1998a). 'Late Upper Palaeolithic' (LUP), 'Bronze Age' and 'Iron Age' finds and sites from the area have been included within works of wider scope (Jacobi 1991; Manby 1986; King 1985), but no account exists which is directly concerned with the prehistoric settlement of Wensleydale. Preliminary reports on the later prehistory of the uplands between Tees and Swale are available (Laurie 1985; Fleming and Laurie 1985–1994). The Swaledale Ancient Boundaries Project (final report in preparation) is concerned mainly with the co-axial field systems and stone-walled settlements in the vicinity of Reeth in Swaledale. These later prehistoric and Romano-British farmsteads and field systems are largely excluded from this paper. However, it will be proposed that the organised landscape represented by these wide-ranging field systems and settlements was conceived and constructed by developing communities already established across the area by the Late Bronze Age, at or soon after 1000 BC.

In so doing, I shall outline the conclusions I have reached on the significance of the evidence presented here, either as general distribution maps or in schedule form, towards an understanding of these early north-eastern Pennine Dale landscapes. I shall describe in some detail the general characteristics and distribution across the area of the recently recognised rock art, the round barrows — often cup-marked, the stone ring-works — which are provisionally interpreted as ring cairns, the free-standing stone circles and the very many substantial burnt mounds, all these structures being characteristic of more widespread settlement during the Bronze Age. I shall describe the

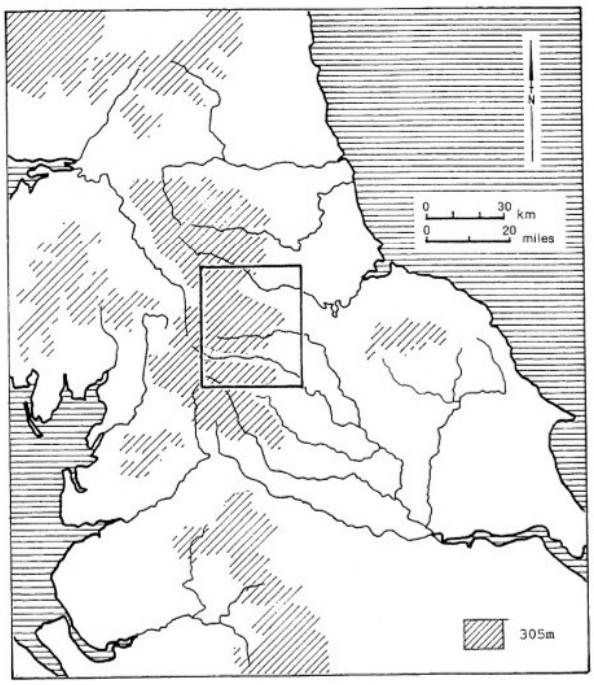

Figure 59: Northern England showing location of survey area

surviving prehistoric landscape of Carperby Moor, an upland fossil landscape where sites of widely differing age have survived and which have not been adequately described elsewhere.

The palimpsest of slight and fragmented remains of those earlier communities that have survived within and beyond the extensive organised landscape of the Iron Age and later Romano-British settlements will be introduced within the second part of this paper. Space prevents full consideration of the later prehistoric occupation; however, I shall demonstrate the contrast between the rather sparse evidence (entirely of lithic surface collections) available for late glacial and Mesolithic activity with the widespread and varied evidence of the first pastoralist communities — rock art, round barrows, stone circles, ring cairns, stone artefacts and the recently discovered burnt mounds. Hoards of metalwork and individual finds from the area have already been described (Manby 1986 and Manby *et al.*, Ch. 5 this volume).

Detailed consideration of the later prehistoric settlements and field systems that have been recognised during the course of this fieldwork must be deferred to a later paper. However, I shall propose that the very numerous burnt mounds, interpreted here as sweat-house/saunas (Barfield and Hodder 1987), are themselves *indicators* of the existence of actual settlements of Middle Bronze Age date, perhaps in the form of tented villages of transhumant herders, the most probable users of the mounds. There is no question now that the burnt mounds are the most numerous prehistoric sites in the area. In total, 127 sites are listed in the gazetteer. They are also individually very substantial; many are in excess of 10m in diameter and more than 1m in height, and several examples are in excess of 15m in diameter and 2m in height. Evidence of the use of similar sites elsewhere throughout northern latitudes points to their use for inner cleansing of mind and spirit in addition to straightforward ablution. Their location at springs may be significant. The first section will, however, be concerned with the evidence for earliest human activity and occupation within the study area and will place on record the lithic collections made during the course of recent fieldwork by myself and by Robin Minnitt and others in Wensleydale, as well as the collections from Preston Moor and from Stake Fell. The collections made some 50 years ago on the Semer Water lake-edge and on Carperby Moor by the late R.M. Chapman, together with the collection made on Thornton Rust Moor by the late George Musgrove of Thornton Rust, are also recorded.

These surface collections represent the only evidence available at present for human activity across the uplands of the River Ure and Swale catchments during the early post glacial and Mesolithic periods.

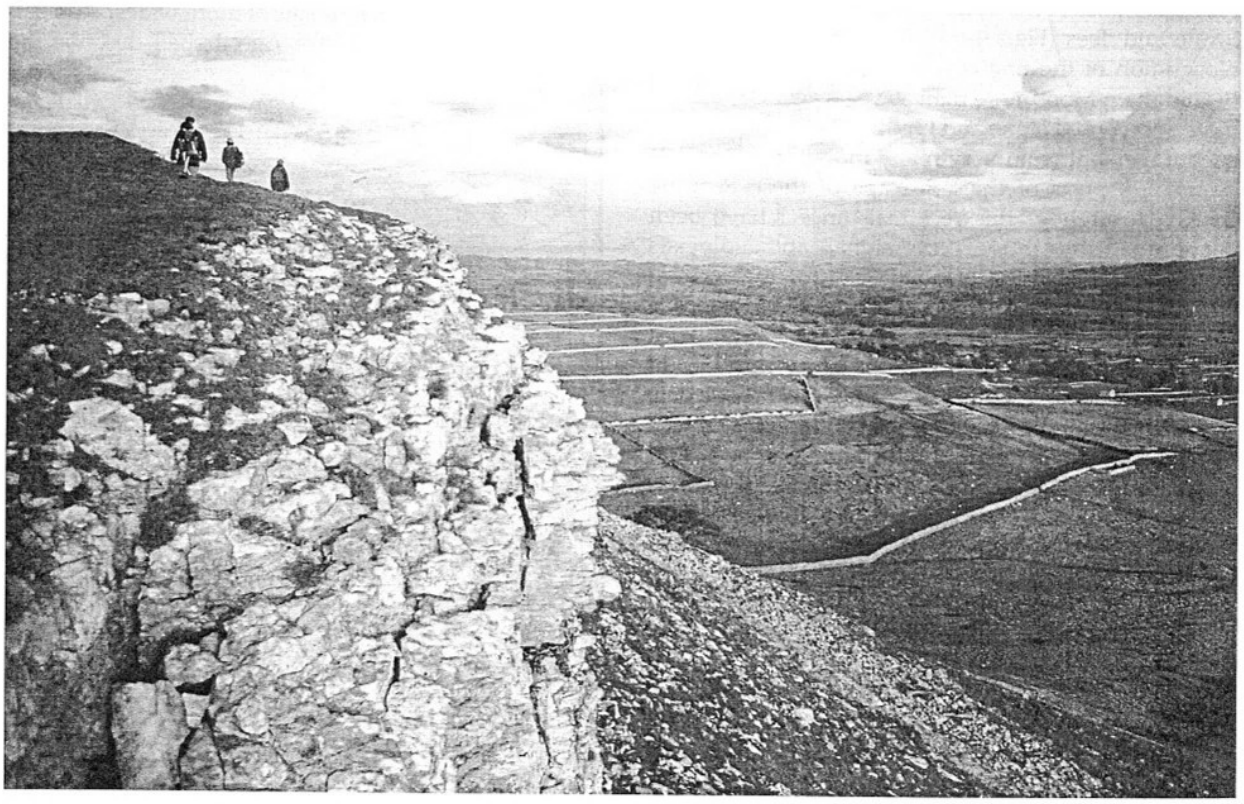

***Plate 29**: Wensleydale, Carperby, Ivy Scar with Oxclose Pasture below. View eastwards towards the North York Moors across the Vale of Mowbray. Embanked circle, small cairns, burnt mound and early (undated) field system on Oxclose*

Part 1: The Lateglacial, Mesolithic and Neolithic Occupation of the Area

(Figs 59–67)

In a model for the latest Mesolithic occupation of the north-east of England, Penny Spikins (Spikins 1996), has argued that the Pennine Dales would have been occupied at a comparatively late date (after about 5000 BC) following loss of land on the coast and at the estuaries as a consequence of rapid sea level rise during the early Holocene (Coles 1998). Penny Spikins also predicted that early hunter activities would be concentrated at watershed, interfluve locations. She allocated river catchments to dialectic groups whose winter aggregation areas were coastal or estuarine. The model linked summer hunting zones on the Pennine uplands and North York Moors with the coastal settlements by riverside pathways. It can be observed that access to the upper dales would be easier where the river flows at a right angle to the coast. Furthermore that year round aggregation or settlement would be possible on sheltered gravel river terraces within the ravine of the Tees, as at Towler Hill, Barnard Castle, on the Semer Water lake-edge or at the Sandbeds, Otley on the Wharfe (Cowling 1973; Cowling and Stickland 1947). All the evidence available at present supports this model.

Access to the coastal zone from Swaledale and from Wensleydale is difficult; the Swale and Ure flow southward to the Humber and direct access to the coast is barred by the North York Moors (Pl.29). Spikins predicted that the more remote dales of Wharfe, Nidd, Ure and Swale were occupied by 'stranded' populations based on the Holderness, Humber coastal zones following loss of land below rapidly rising sea levels in the earlier Holocene (Coles 1998, fig.11).

Actual evidence for a human presence in both Wensleydale and Swaledale before 5000 BC is very slight. There are just two find sites with Early Mesolithic or Late Upper Palaeolithic artefact forms within the Ure catchment if the excavated lowland Early Mesolithic site at Little Holtby Farm, Leeming Bar is included (J. Wright, pers. comm. and *CBA Forum* 1995, 6). Early post glacial finds within the Swale catchment are confined to stray finds and to broad blade microliths from Topcliffe on Swale (Cowling and Stickland 1947, 460–2).

The Tees provides direct access to the coast, however, and there is rather more evidence for early post glacial occupation of the Tees valley. Thus, even allowing that occasional forays were probably made into the interior from the more favourable coastal region, from the Humber or further south, from 'Doggerland', the northern Pennine Dales were, on the basis of the evidence, pristine wilderness areas before the final Mesolithic and the arrival of the first pastoralist farmers at about 4000 BC. Lithic scatters which include most minute microliths and pressure flaked arrowpoints, which are interpreted as of final Mesolithic or transitional Neolithic date, are more widespread across the whole region (Fig.63), on the basis of very late (final) Mesolithic dates for similar lithic assemblages from excavated and dated hearths with both scalenes and rod forms on the south Pennine watershed (Spikins 1995).

1. Nab End, Carperby Moor, Wensleydale: an Open Air Early Post glacial Occupation Site (Figs 60–2)

Wensleydale is at the northern limit of the area of Britain known to have been occupied during the late glacial period *c.*12000–10000 BC by hunter groups whose prey animals included reindeer, horse and elk, in an open tundra environment (Jacobi 1978; 1991). Roger Jacobi (1991, 129, fig.13) has stated that 'late glacial find spots can only be confirmed beyond ambiguity for England and Wales. The most northerly are in Cumbria and in Wensleydale (North Yorkshire)'.

Jacobi (pers. comm.) refers here to the large patinated flint blade in the Hawes Countryside Museum

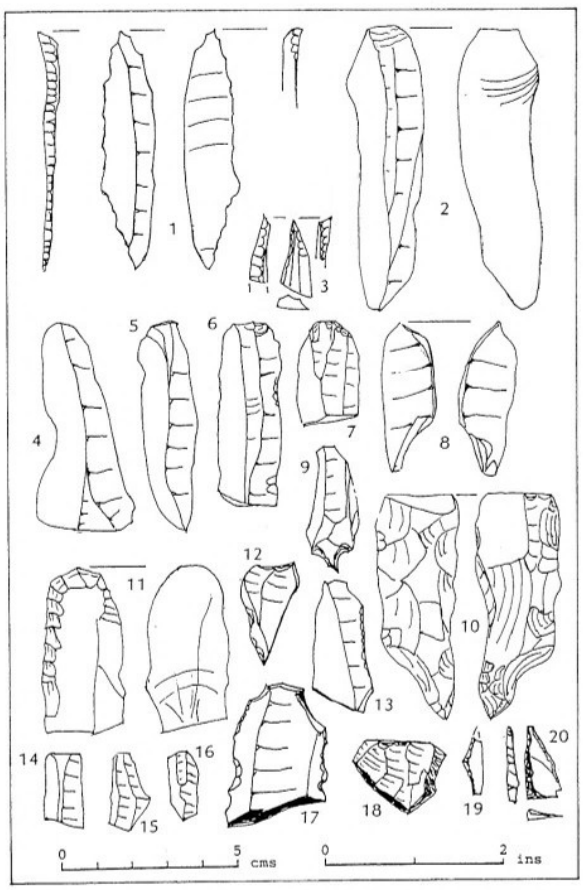

Figure 60: Lithic finds from north-north-east of Thackthwaite Beck, Carperby Moor, Wensleydale

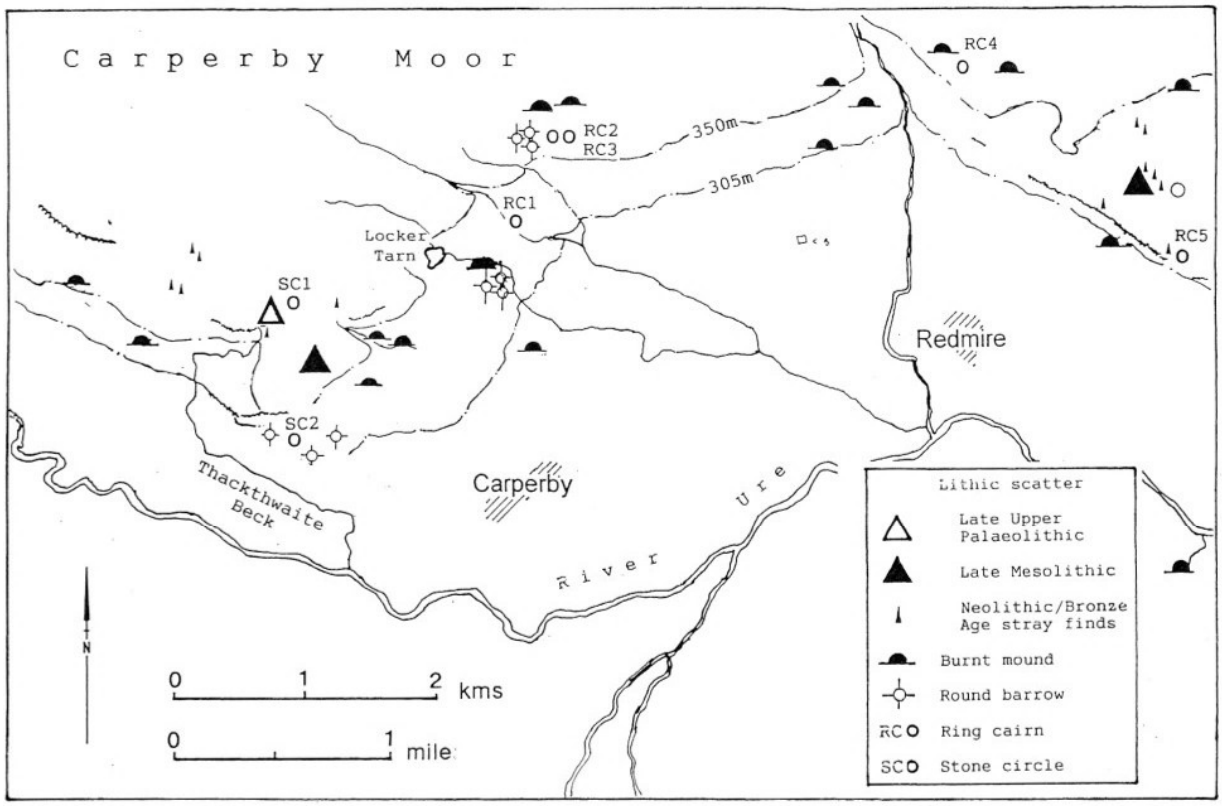

Figure 61: Location of prehistoric sites on Carperby Moor, Wensleydale

which may be described as a point with a semblance of a tang, found on Nab End above Thackthwaite Beck spring (Fig.60, 1). This point was found with other flints more than 50 years ago by the late R.M. Chapman of Bainbridge (Robin Minnitt, pers. comm.). Mr Minnitt recalls that flints were found at two locations on Nab End; the first was approximately 50m east of Thackthwaite Spring (SD988911, 370m OD) on a steep south-westerly facing slope where small erosion gullies form, close and re-vegetate as elsewhere in the Pennines. The second, located on the level summit of Nab End towards the transmitter masts, was the find site of quantities of spalls of flint of Mesolithic aspect, with no retouched pieces.

The backed tanged point has close affinity with Late Upper Palaeolithic armatures and was found with other artefacts which would not be foreign to an assemblage of late glacial date. The artefacts from the Thackthwaite Beck Spring site (Fig.60) comprise, in addition to the tanged point (1), a very large blade (2), a second robust point (broken) of lightly patinated flint with opposed retouch and retained cortex on one edge (3), a patinated heavy blade-like flake (4), a grey flint (unpatinated) blade (6), a burin on a decortical flake of unpatinated translucent brown flint (8), an awl (9), a heavy end scraper of patinated flint (11) and a point on a patinated flake (12). Mesolithic finds include a small pick (10), small bladelets (14–16), a micro-core and the scalene triangle (19). A broad blade microlith (20) is a stray find from Swinehaw Bottom. The brown peat water-stained blade (5) is probably from the Semer Water lake-edge collection, which is similarly stained.

1.2 Discussion

The diversity of missile points and tools represented in the small collection from Nab End is most unusual if not unique within Pennine surface collections. The two backed points, if not diagnostic of an LUP assemblage, are very close to the backed blade of non-microlithic technology and have no parallels from among Mesolithic collections. The blades are very much larger than any found on Pennine Mesolithic sites. The burin and heavy end scraper are also characteristic of the LUP and absent from the Pennine Mesolithic.

The variation in the patination or absence of patination on the artefacts is a problem – it may be expected that very early flint artefacts would be patinated and that artefacts of common age would share the same patination. This is a guide rather than a rule but nevertheless the flints from Nab End show differing patination and may be of differing age. The presence of the flint pick, the chert micro-core and the microblades confirm the presence of Mesolithic occupation.

The find location (Fig.61; Pl.30) is a classic vantage point on a south-westerly facing slope, some 100m to the north-north-east of the powerful spring which emerges from below Ivy Scar — the source of Thackthwaite Beck. The spring continues to flow after prolonged drought

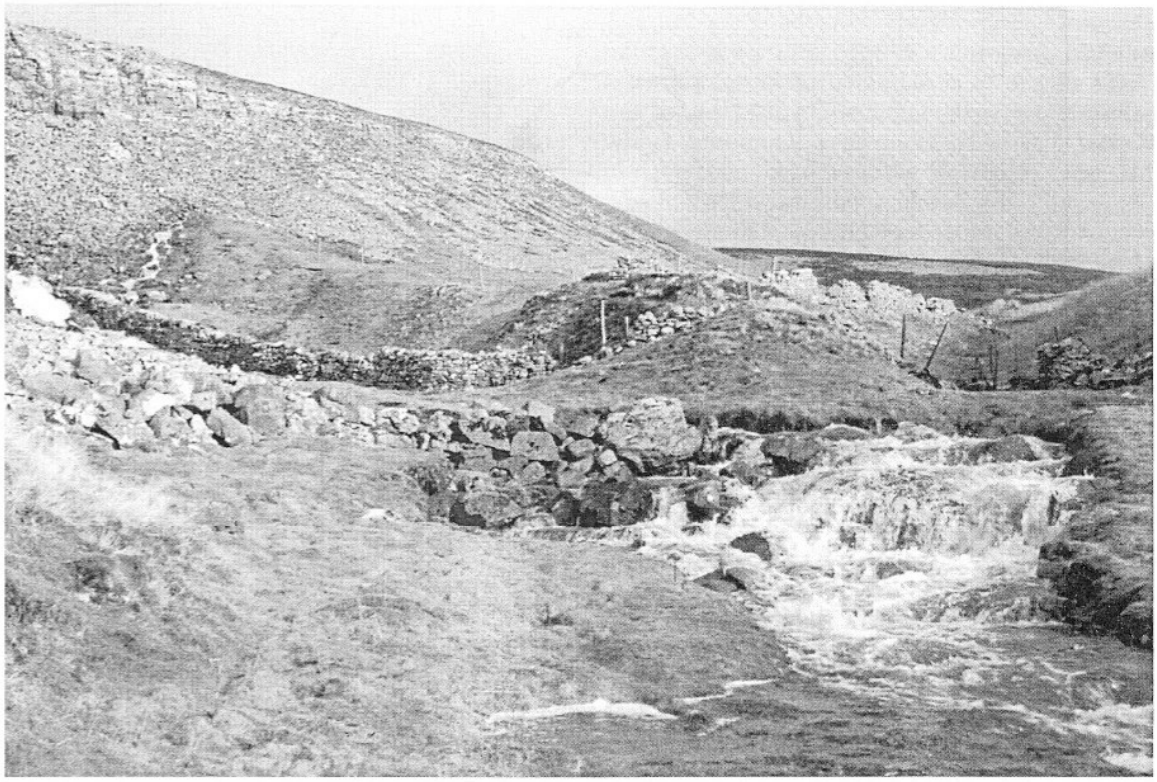

***Plate 30**: Wensleydale, Carperby, Thackthwaite Beck spring emerges from below Blue Scar. Early post glacial lithic finds made nearby. Stone circle on heather moor 200m to NE*

***Plate 31**: Swaledale above Calvert Houses, Rigg. Mesolithic and Neolithic occupation site*

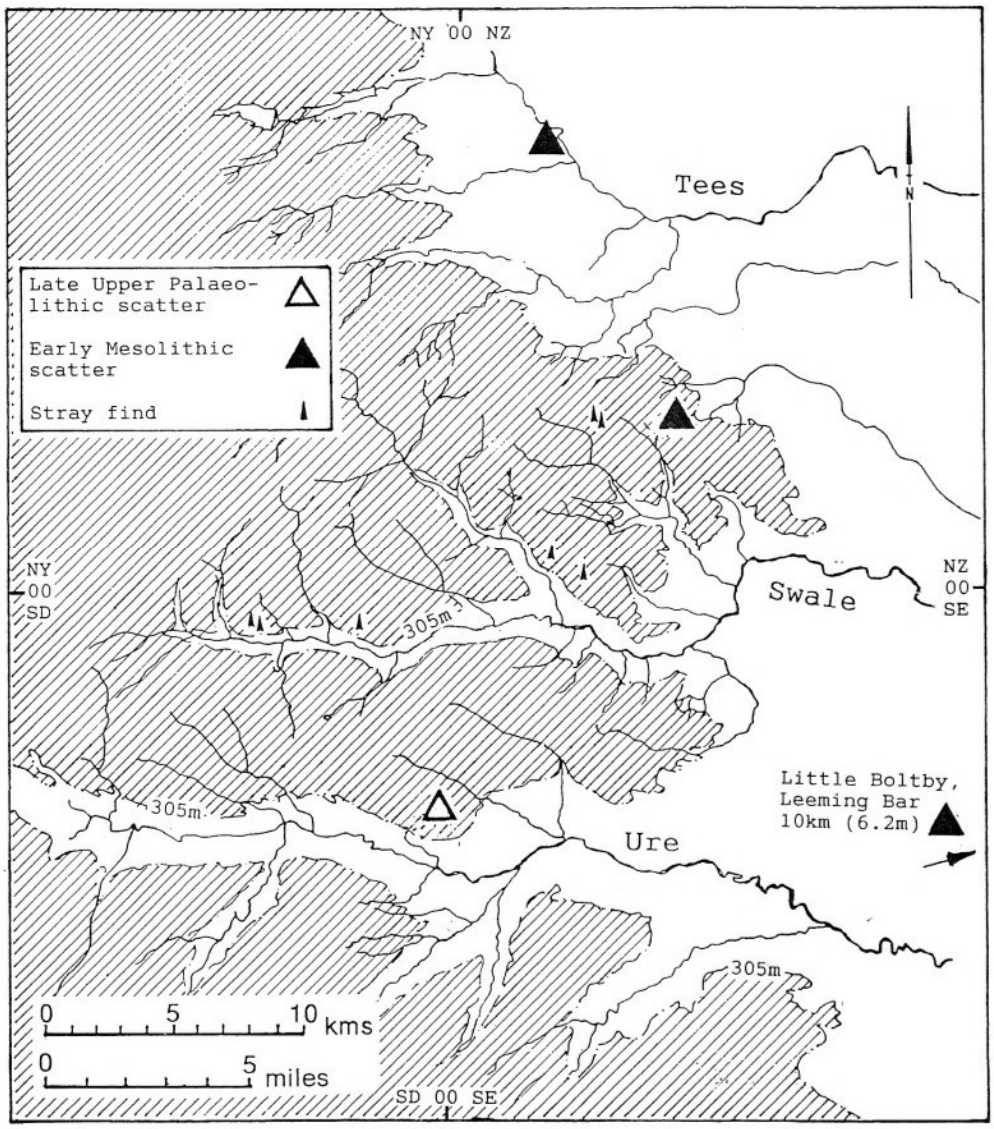

Figure 62: Lithic evidence for early post glacial and early Mesolithic occupation

and may have provided both pragmatic and cultural motivation for visits to the place on the part of earliest hunters. Further evidence for an early post glacial, Zone 4, presence in Wensleydale is limited to the single stray microlith from Swinehaw Bottom.

A hint of an early presence in Swaledale can be confirmed by the tranchet axe and refitted flake, (Fig.67, 65–6), found together with three micro-scalene triangle microliths, two are drawn (68–9), large circular and horseshoe flint scrapers on a vehicle track above Calvert Houses (Laurie 1985; Pls 31–2), a large backed flake similar to those from Star Carr, found above Castle Farm on Fremington Top (Fig.67, 70), an unpatinated flint point from Copperthwaite Allotment (Fig.67, 71), and by a large backed point of white patinated flint found with a blade-like flake of white quartz (Fig.67, 72–3) from Stoops Rigg, above Low Row Pasture (Pl.33). The end scraper of black Pennine chert found on the summit of Cock How (Fig.67, 74) is an indication that stray finds of possible early post glacial age may occur almost anywhere, and their presence should be recorded.

The evidence for early post glacial occupation of sheltered riverside terraces in Teesdale — most notably at Towler Hill, *c.*1.5km (1 mile) west of Barnard Castle and below Wynch Bridge in upper Teesdale is more extensive and already on the record (Coggins *et al.* 1989).

All the artefacts mentioned above and below are, or will be soon, available for inspection or further research within the museum collections at Hawes, Richmond, and at Barnard Castle.

There is very little or no evidence in the Teesdale lowlands, in the form of lithic scatters, for prehistoric activity or occupation sites at any distance from the River Tees. I have not found any stone artefacts in

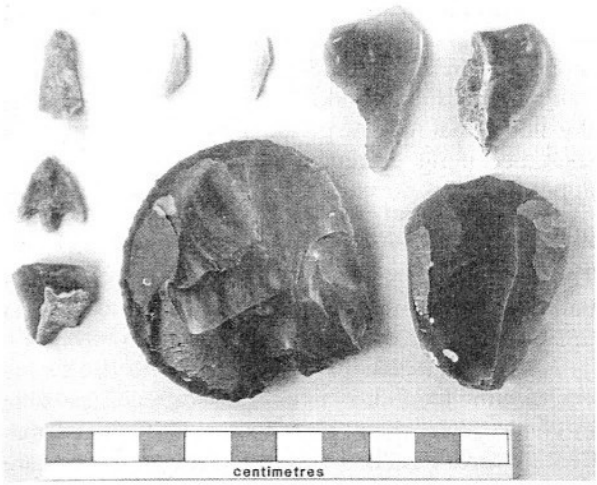

Plate 32: Swaledale above Calvert Houses, selected artefacts

Teesdale except on sheltered riverside terraces or on bluffs overlooking the middle reaches of the river. In Upper Teesdale, lithic scatters that denote Mesolithic occupation have been found on high limestone grassland and on moraine vantage points in several locations (Coggins and Fairless 1997).

Thus, on the basis of the present evidence, both Wensleydale and Swaledale appear to have been rarely visited during the long period of rapid climatic warming with occasional return to cold conditions represented by pollen zones I–III, or during the late glacial, the Allerød Interstadial, the Younger Dryas Windermere re-advance. The Pennines, a low range of hills at the western edge of a European plain which extended east to the Urals (Jacobi 1978) were a real barrier to access to the Atlantic coast for communities whose permanent, year-round settlements were likely to have been located on the North Sea coast and are now lost below present sea level.

The absence of evidence at present for the early post glacial occupation of Wensleydale and Swaledale may arise from fieldwork bias in favour of high limestone pastures and erosion patches at the edge of the blanket peat of the Pennine summit scarp slopes. Alternatively, if the absence of evidence is real – and the early sites are not eventually found where they are most likely to be — buried below hill wash and sealed below the permanent dale pastures — on riverside terraces and moraine bluffs just above the river floodplain, the absence of recorded occupation of Wensleydale and Swaledale may be, as predicted by Penny Spikins, the result of the relative inaccessibility of these dales from the coastal settlement zone. This is in contrast to the summit ridges of the central plateau of the North York Moors where very many Early Mesolithic occupation sites are located (Jacobi 1978).

2. Late Mesolithic Occupation: *c.*9000–*c.*5500 BP

The past vegetational history of Wensleydale has been studied at two locations, namely at Huker Mire Moss (SD940880) and at Thornton Mire (SD950870). The unpublished Huker Mire diagram was compiled by

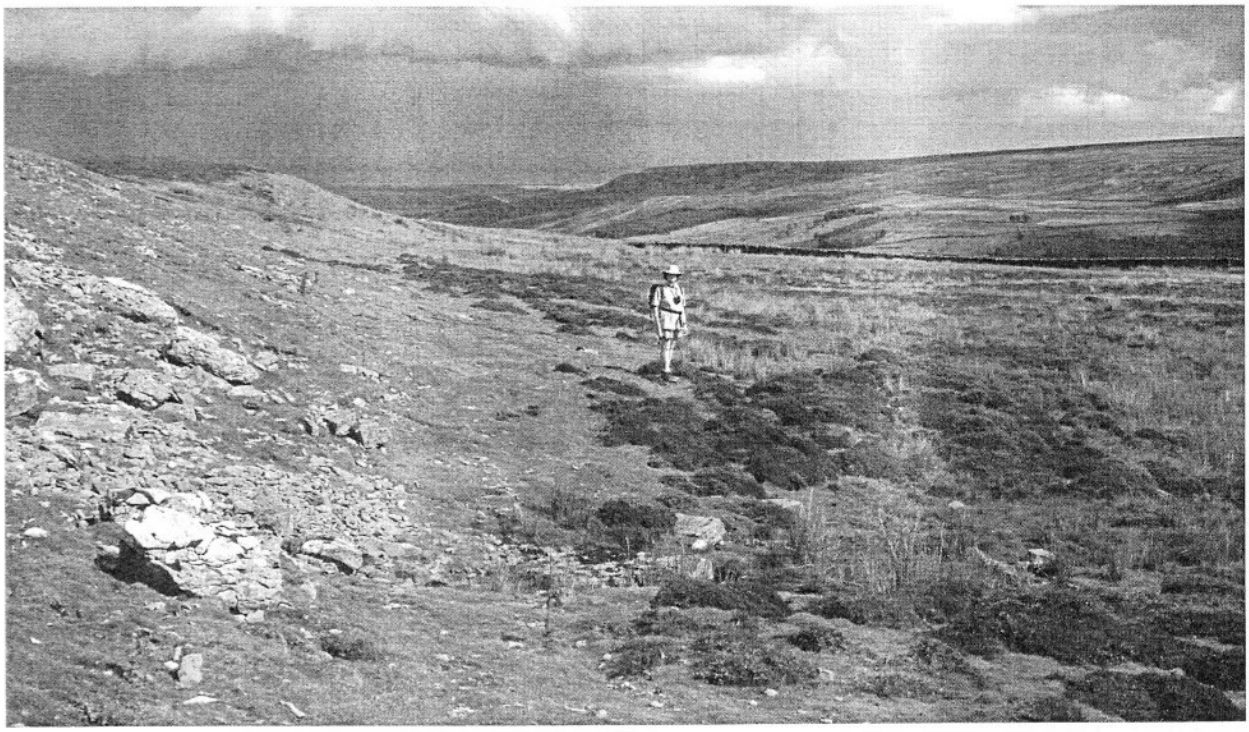

***Plate 33**: Swaledale, Melbecks, Stoops Rigg. Spring emerging below limestone outcrop. Burnt mound at spring head, lithic finds from outcrop include quartz flakes, Fig.67*

the Wensleydale WEA in 1989. The Thornton Mire sequence has been radiocarbon dated. The base, dated to the Boreal, *c.*8500 BP, records high pine levels until the Atlantic *c.*4500 BP when birch, alder and hazel woodland developed, with some elm, lime and willow (Honeyman 1985). There was a marked decrease in birch/alder/hazel woodland during the Sub-boreal, *c.*2600 BP, and the landscape has remained open since then.

No pollen diagrams are available that relate to the vegetation contemporary with the Mesolithic occupation of Swaledale — those available commence after the elm decline, after *c.*5000 BP. However, by analogy with adjacent areas of the Pennines, especially with Malham Tarn Moss (Pigott and Pigott 1959) and Stump Cross, near Grassington (Walker 1956), it can be inferred that during the Boreal and Boreal–Atlantic transition *c.*9500–6500 BP the dominant vegetation of Wensleydale and of Swaledale was birch, pine and hazel woodland with grassland or open heath at higher elevations. Full deciduous woodland with alder replacing birch and pine was established across all dale sides and river floodplains by 6650 BP — during the altithermal Atlantic period, and with elm and oak soon becoming dominant. Small-leafed lime trees appear towards the end of the period (Walker 1956).

2.1 *The sites and finds*

The extent and character of the Later Mesolithic occupation of Swaledale and of the Swale–Tees–Greta uplands has been described (Coggins *et al.* 1989).

No fieldwork has been carried out to determine whether the identification of lithic scatters is possible in Wensleydale at low elevations, within the permanent pastures close to the river. The lower pastures are on moraines, drumlins and drift-covered hill slopes where heavy clays predominate and the gravel terraces are not well developed. It may be that Mesolithic

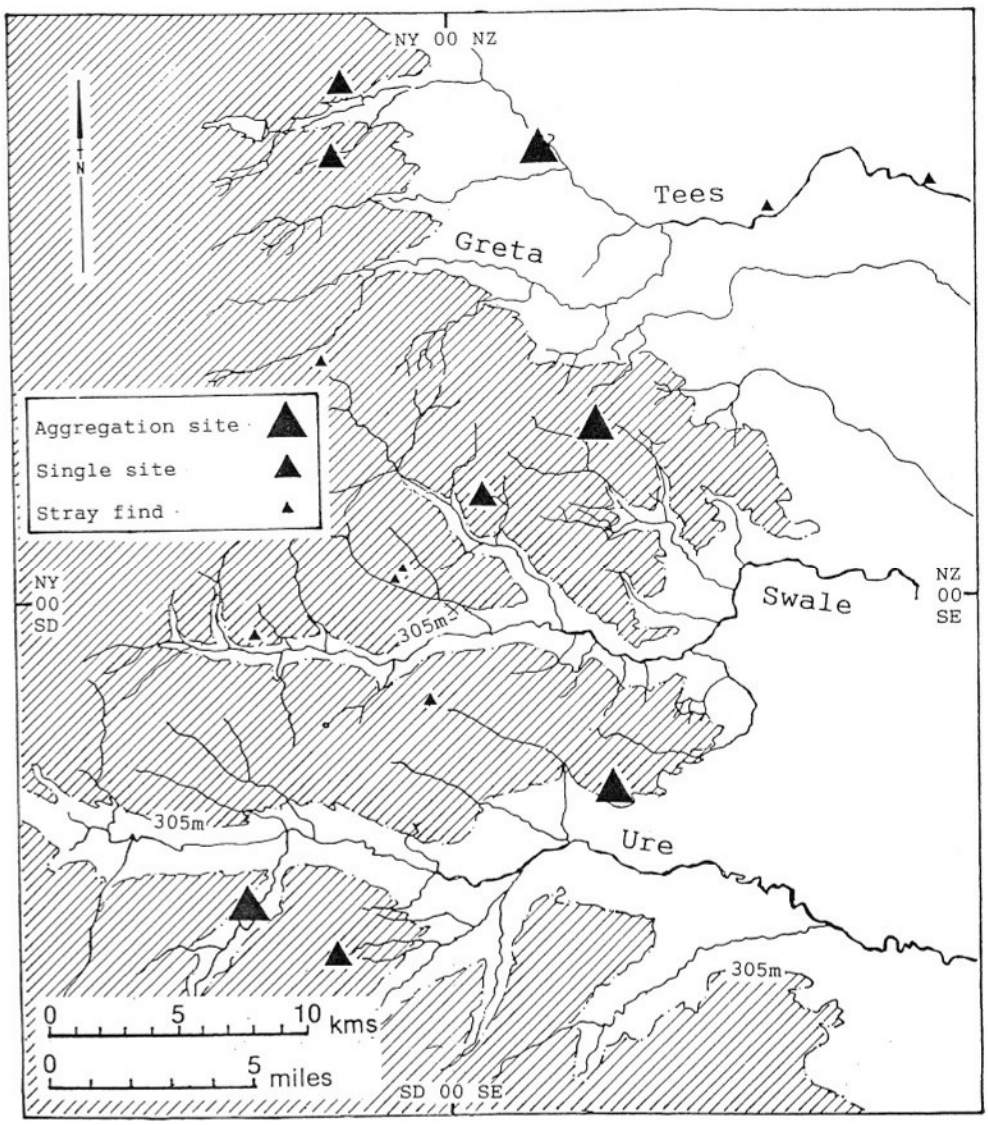

Figure 63: Lithic evidence from Late Mesolithic occupation

activity is confined to the thin soils overlying limestone, as at 300m on Preston Moor.

Indeed, these lower pastures are only rarely ploughed for re-seeding and opportunities for searching ploughland for lithics here are limited. Nevertheless, opportunities do occur and until a sample of the lower pastures have been walked, any distribution must be considered provisional.

Lithic scatters, which include narrow blade microliths diagnostic of Late Mesolithic occupation within the catchment of the Rivers Ure, Swale and of the Tees–Greta uplands (Fig.63), share the same limited disjunct distribution as the areas with rock art (Fig.68). The sites on Preston Moor in Wensleydale and on Barningham High Moor on the Swale-Tees interfluve may be considered to be aggregation areas. Here the lithic finds extend across a considerable distance from central concentrations. These areas were clearly used by several different hunter period camp sites and may represent repeated re-occupation of a favoured settlement location. Representative artefacts from lithic scatters from three locations in Wensleydale are shown (Figs 64–6). The artefacts from two of these locations, from Preston Moor (Fig.64, 1–54), and from a site on Stake Fell, west of Gayle Ings in Thoralby (Fig.65, 1–28), are so idiosyncratic and similar (they include an exceptionally minute microlithic component), that it seems reasonable to conclude they represent occupation of widely separated locations by a single group operating in Wensleydale. Collections from both sites include late prehistoric arrow-points. The Semer Water collection is of mixed age; several Neolithic arrow-points are included and the microlithic component is not exceptionally minute and it is a 'normal' Late Mesolithic microlith assemblage.

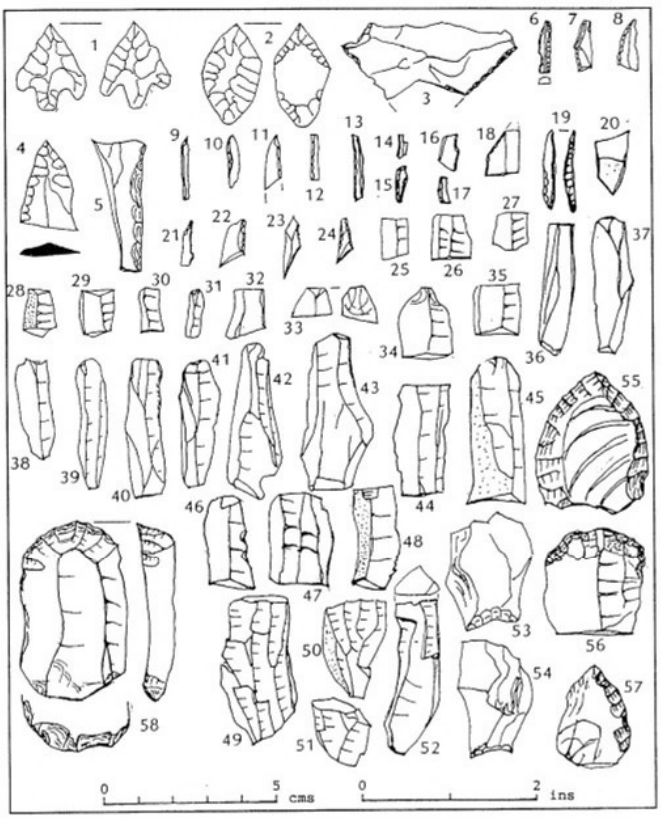

Figure 64: Lithic finds from Preston Moor, Wensleydale

2.1.1 Preston Moor (Fig.64)

The area with Mesolithic artefact scatters on Preston Moor is large (Pl.34) and is located at just above 300m OD on a wide limestone pasture sloping gently to the south-east. Unusually for a limestone pasture, there is a stream to provide a water source and this may have been the reason for the settlement here. This location is at risk from the imminent rapid advance of the limestone quarry.

The surface collection includes very minute microlithic rods, points and scalenes. Micro-cores, micro blades and blade fragments are diagnostic of Late Mesolithic. The several hollow scrapers are the only tools present. A single leaf arrow-point, a transverse arrow-point, and a barbed and tanged arrowhead are evidence for Neolithic activity here also. The scrapers (Fig.64, 55–8) are stray finds and are not from the Mesolithic site. The large double-ended scraper is of patinated grey-white mottled flint and could be an Early Mesolithic artefact.

The presence of pressure flaked artefacts on the Mesolithic site (Fig.64, 1–5) indicates that the site was visited during the Neolithic period also. Preston Moor is a significant settlement area, and excavation could potentially reveal individual camp sites. There are some burnt flints in the collection, suggesting hearth deposits could be present and therefore radiocarbon dated.

2.1.2 Stake Fell (Fig.65)

Lithic finds from Stake Fell (Fig.65, 1–28), are of later Mesolithic character, except no.25 which is a hollow base leaf-shaped Neolithic arrow-point. The collection is of patinated flint with some black Pennine chert artefacts also and closely resembles that from Preston Moor, so close that it is difficult not to conclude that both collections represent contemporary occupation, possibly by the same group operating from sites located on both sides of the dale.

The Stake Fell site is close to permanently running springs, sheltered from the west and with wide views to the south and east — a most attractive location. At an undetermined, but later, date a group of at least twelve roundhouses together with paddock-like fields were constructed at the same place. This unenclosed settlement, first recognised and photographed from the air by Robert Bewley, can fairly be described as a late prehistoric village, similar to others excavated and dated to the Middle Bronze Age in the Cheviots (Gates 1983) and to the undated settlements above Malham Tarn (Raistrick and Holmes 1962). Strangely, there is no burnt mound at this location although in all respects

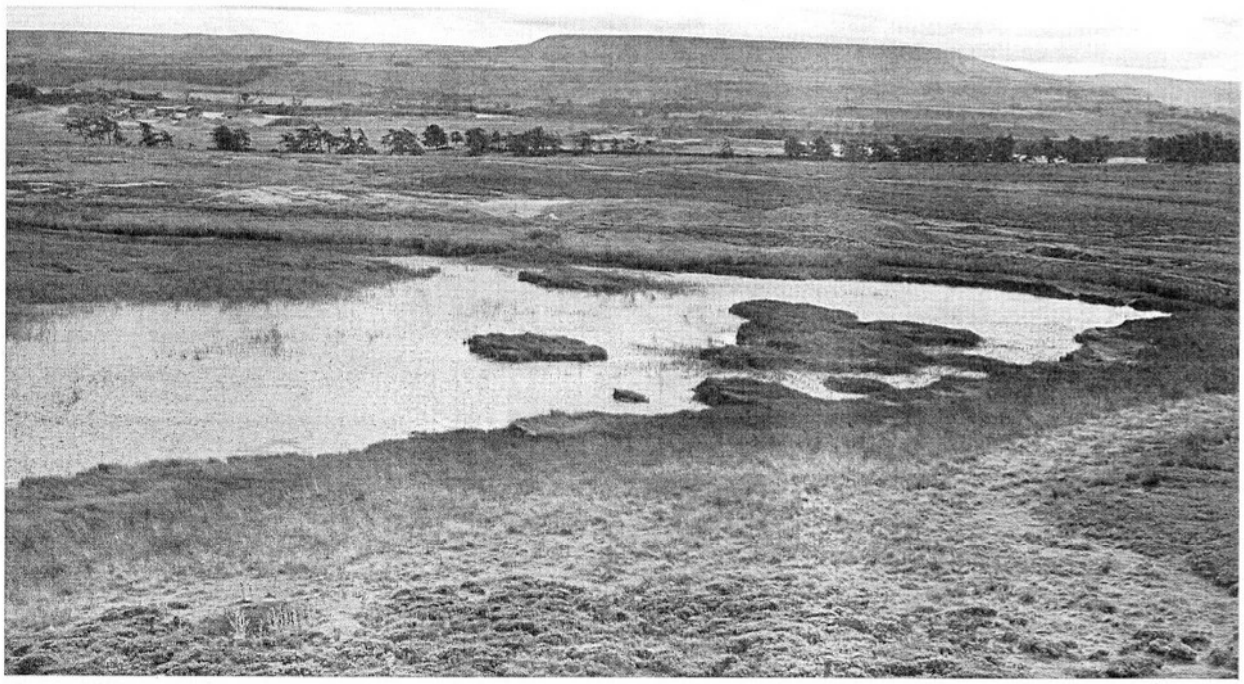

Plate 34: Wensleydale, Preston Moor, Late Mesolithic and Neolithic. Occupation sites on limestone pasture in middle distance now quarried away

the springs are characteristic of the situation where burnt mounds are usually found in Wensleydale

2.1.3 Thornton Rust Moor (Fig.65, 30–7)

A significant group of flint and chert artefacts, which include some very fine Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age arrow-points, were collected by the late George Musgrove many years ago, after heather burning in the vicinity of the Dovestones Shooting Box (information from the late Mrs H. Dinsdale). Representative examples are illustrated (Fig.65, 30–7). The hollow based point (30) has parallels which are more common in Ireland than on mainland Britain (Green 1980). Hollow based arrow-points have been found at Semer Water and at the Stake Fell site.

2.1.4 Kidstones Scar, Bishopdale: an unusual stray find

The extraordinary white patinated flint transverse arrowhead found on a molehill within the medieval walled enclosure above Kidstones Scar is an unusual and interesting stray find (Fig.65, 29). The purpose and limited occurrence throughout Yorkshire of exceptionally large transverse arrowheads has been summarised by Radley (1964b). Experiments made with reproduction arrows mounted with armatures of similar type have shown that average flights of 42m (46 yards) were possible, quite straight with fletched arrows of 0.71m (28 inches) and a 1.82m (6 foot) fibreglass bow of 25.4kg (56lbs). Such arrows would be suitable for killing birds in flight.

2.1.5 The Semer Water lake-edge (Fig.66; Pl.35)

The Semer Water lake-edge (Pl.35) and environs has provided diagnostic lithic evidence of activity if not of

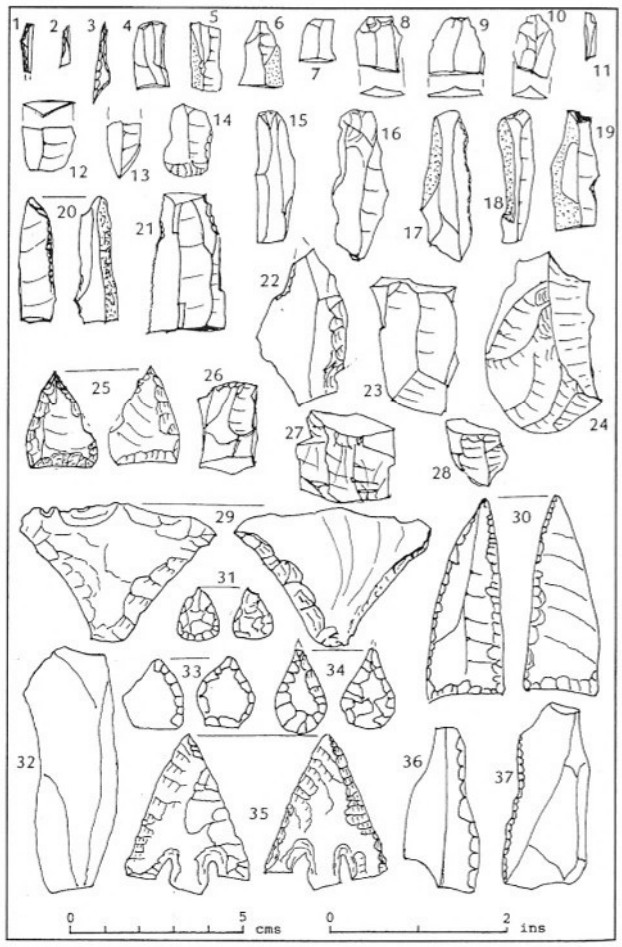

Figure 65: Lithic finds from Stake Fell, upper Wensleydale

actual occupation, close to the lake from the Late Mesolithic to the Middle Bronze Age. The fine, Middle Bronze Age, decorated basal looped spearhead from Semer Water (Manby 1986, fig.7) was found when the water level dropped below a flat stone, close to a causeway leading to the 'crannog' destroyed soon afterwards by dredging operations (Robin Minnitt, pers comm.).

The more interesting finds of flint and chert from the Semer Water lake-edge are illustrated (Fig.66) and include Late Mesolithic microliths (1–23), blades (24–31) and various late prehistoric arrow-points (32–44). No waste or debitage has been illustrated; however, the provenance notes which accompany the flints in the Hawes Countryside Museum, which were prepared by the late David Hall, include records of the collection of flint and chert cores, flakes, blades and microliths from two different locations at Semer Water together with the arrow-points from the general area of the lake.

During and after dredging of the northern shore of the lake by the Water Authority, remains of red deer, horse and cattle were found from a blue clay deposit close to the shore. Bones, antlers and teeth of red deer were found in considerable quantity, representating several animals. The tip of an antler tine has evidence of human cutting. Two antlers had been broken from the skull after death, the skull bone fragments still attached. The horse remains include teeth and bone. The wild cattle remains included two horncores, teeth and bone. The animal bones were examined by Dr D. Bramwell of Bakewell, and the shaft portion of a red deer femur found in the blue clay was submitted to Dr D.D. Bartley, University of Leeds, for pollen analysis of the cavity material. A date no earlier than Pollen Zone 7b, Sub-Boreal period, not before *c.*3000 BC, was suggested.

A wide range of dates are represented by the later prehistoric arrowhead forms:

Tanged and barbed, nos 41–4, *c.*2500–1500 BC
Transverse, nos 36–7, *c.*3500–2500 BC
Hollow based, no.32, *c.*3000–2500 BC
Leaf shaped, nos 33–5, 38 *c.*4200–2500 BC

The microliths from Semer Water are larger than those from Preston Moor, but are typologically similar; both collections include micro-scalene triangles, narrow rods and points.

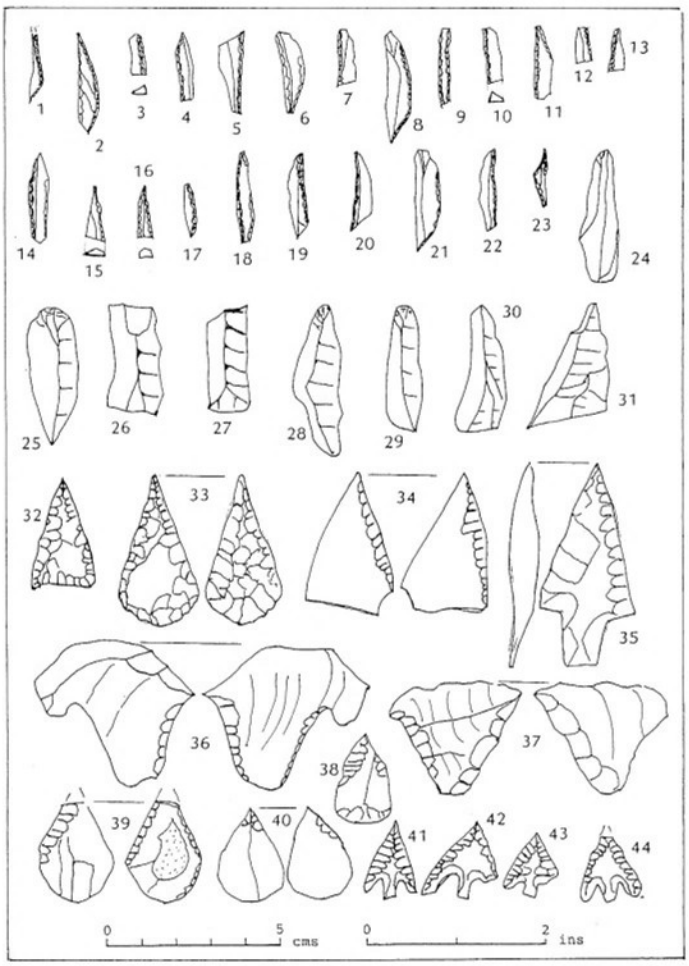

***Figure 66**: Lithic finds from Semer Water lake edge, Raydale, Wensleydale*

Plate 35: Wensleydale, Bainbridge, Semer Water. Lithic finds around the lake edge provide evidence for occasional occupation during the Mesolithic and Neolithic. Burnt mounds on higher ground and a fine decorated bronze spearhead of Hotham Carr industry deposited in the lake provide evidence for other activity during the Middle Bronze Age

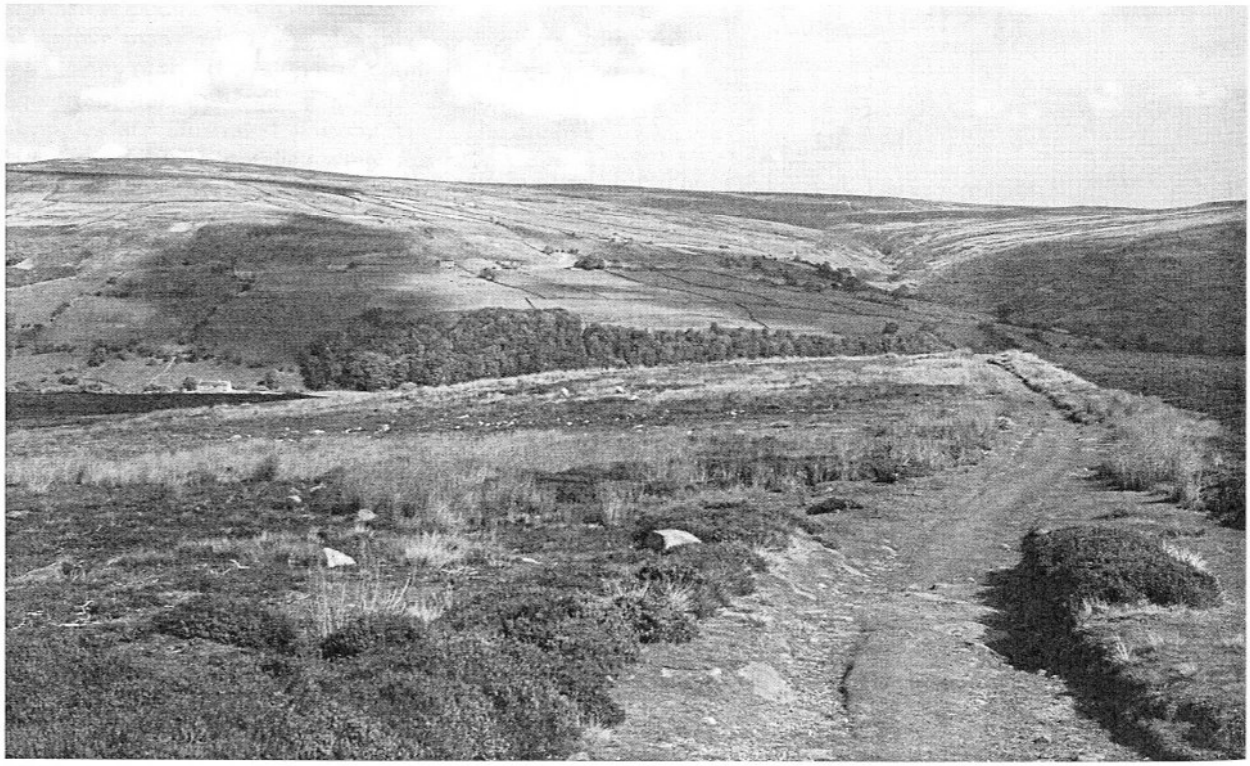

Plate 36: Swaledale, Arkengarthdale. View from Reeth Low Moor northward towards Sleigill and the Swale-Tees/Greta interfluve

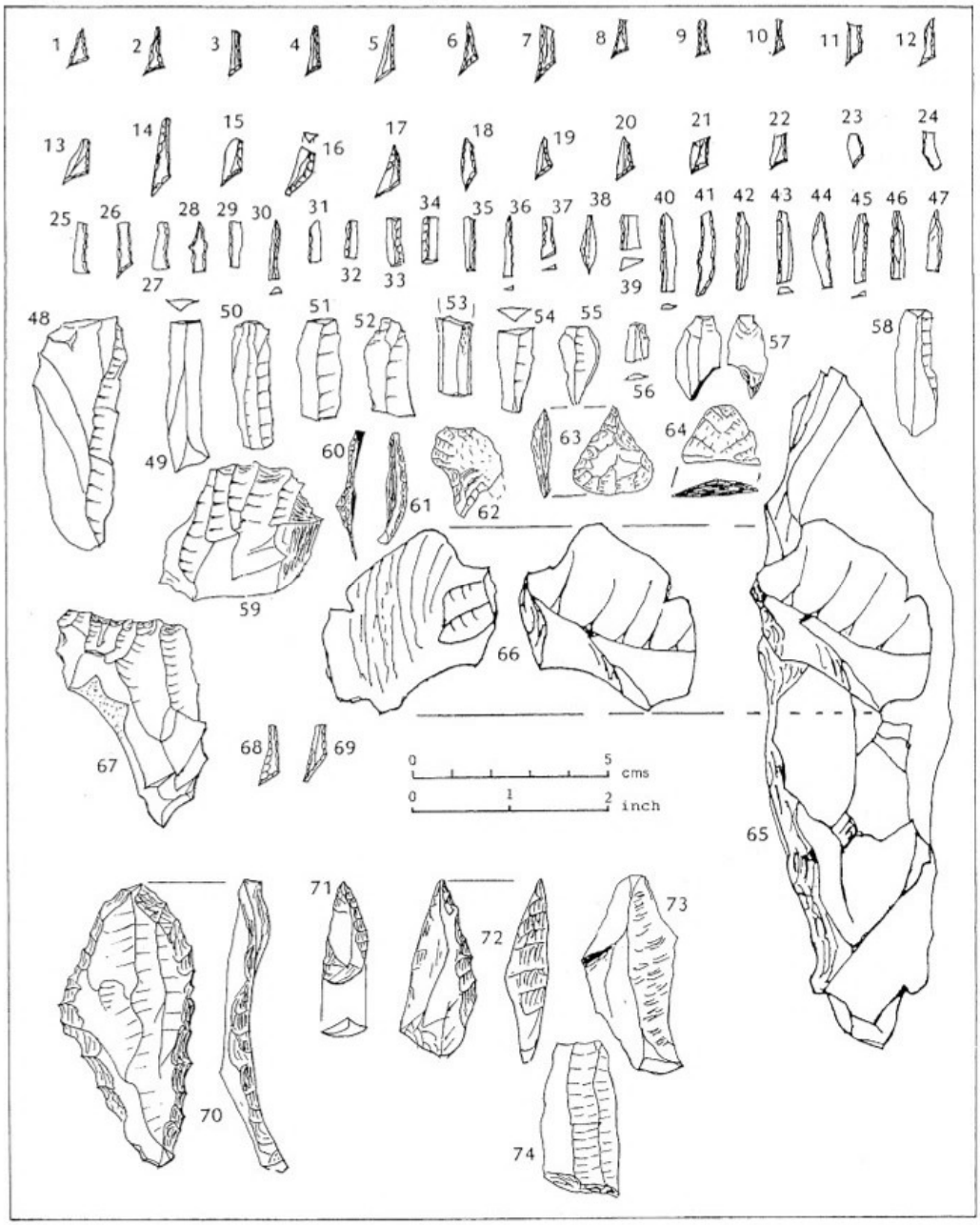

***Figure 67**: Lithic evidence from earliest activity in Swaledale. Arkengarthdale, Sleigill: microliths, 1–24 scalenes, 25–47 rod forms, blades 48–58, core 59, burin spalls 60–1, Neolithic arrow-points 62–4. Calvert Houses: tranchet axe and refitted flake 65–6, core 67, scalenes 68–9. Fremington Top 70–1. Low Row, Stoops Rigg 72–3. Cock How 74*

2.1.6 Swaledale (Fig.67; Pl.36)

The Late Mesolithic occupation of Swaledale and of the Swale-Tees/Greta uplands has been described elsewhere (Coggins *et al.* 1989). The lithic collection from a site at 400m OD above Sleigill, Arkengarthdale (Pls 37–8), may be directly compared with those from Preston Moor and from Stake Fell described earlier. More than 80 microliths have been found on this site, an erosion patch caused by lead contamination; they are most minute in dimensions, commonly less than 4mm in width and 15mm in length. They average 4.02mm in width and 11.8mm in length. Again, pressure flaked arrow-points denote Neolithic activity around this vantage site.

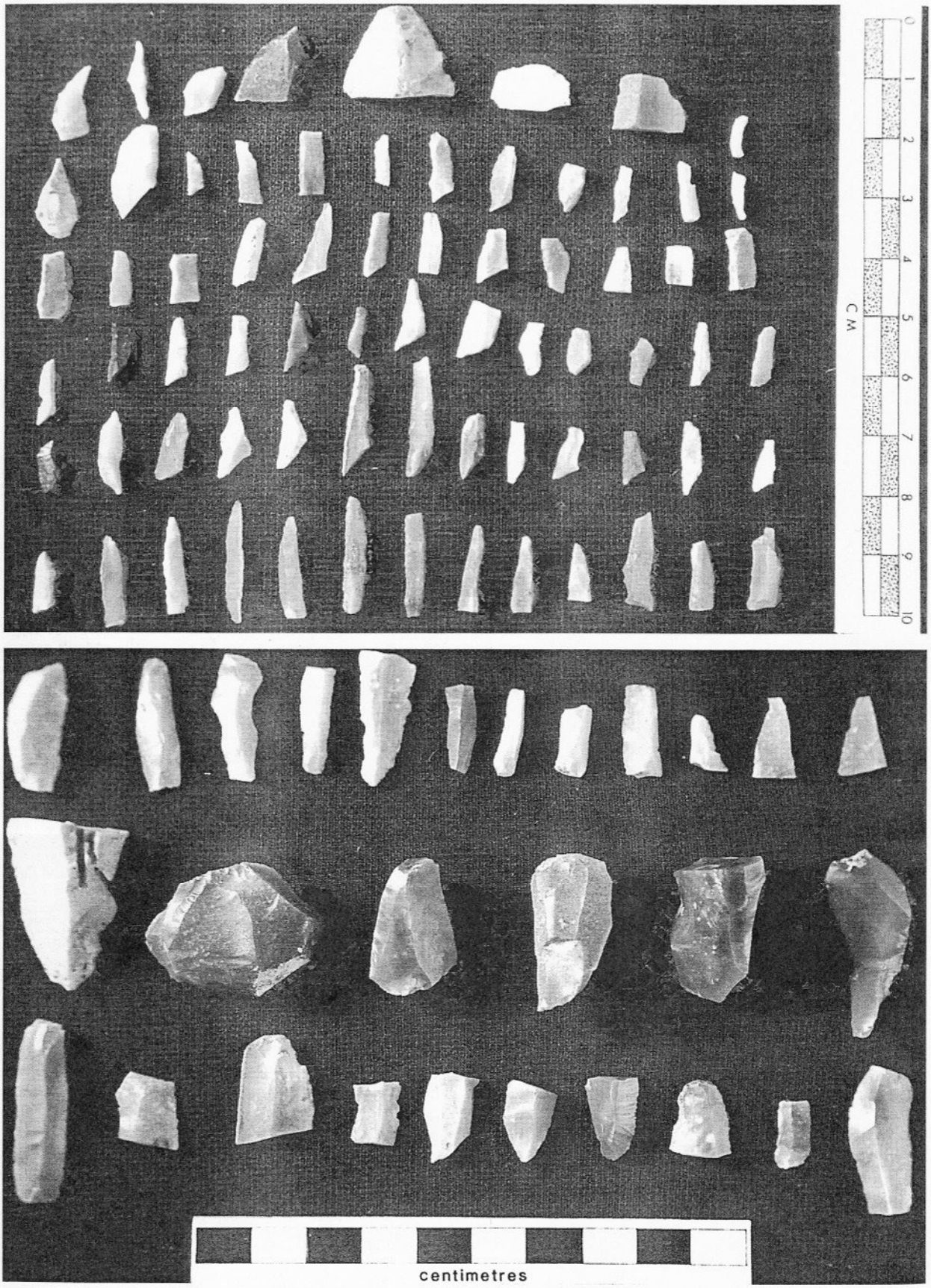

***Plate 37** (top) and **38** (below): Swaledale, Arkengarthdale, Sleigill. Microlith-dominated late Mesolithic flint and chert assemblage from site at 450m OD on the Swale-Tees/Greta interfluve. Note the single Neolithic leaf shaped arrow-point (broken tip), top row Plate 37*

Part 2: The Evidence for First Pastoralist Farming Communities in the Area

(Figs 68–73)

1. Introduction

Recognition of hunter period occupation sites across these three northern Pennine dales has been limited by the nature of the evidence which has been restricted, in the absence of any excavated site, to surface scatters of stone artefacts, notoriously difficult to interpret and date. The evidence for the presence of first farming communities is much more varied and widespread (Figs 68–9, 71). However, there are no Early Neolithic monuments and finds of polished stone axes are very scarce. There are cup-and-ring marked rocks, the single entrance henge, Castle Dykes, in Aysgarth parish (Harding and Lee 1987), and the very large oval cairn known as Stoney Raise on Greenber Edge (Pl.41) may be Later Neolithic. So widespread and numerous are the later prehistoric sites and finds from Wensleydale, Swaledale and from the Swale–Tees/Greta uplands that full consideration of these settlements and field systems and the round barrows, stone circles, ring cairns, and cairnfields which survive within them must be deferred for more detailed consideration (Fleming and Laurie in prep.). Later prehistoric sites, excluding early field systems, not yet surveyed but included on the RCHME Dales Survey on Carperby Moor (Fig.61) will be described briefly in the final section of this paper as an example of the density of surviving field evidence within the area.

The very considerable increase in the intensity of the evidence for later prehistoric activity across the whole of the area can be demonstrated by describing, firstly the distribution and general characteristics of the rock art. Secondly, I shall describe the distribution, general characteristics and the potential for future research of the very numerous and often very large burnt mounds which have recently been discovered.

It is considered that these two very different classes of field monument can be interpreted, at the very least, as indicators of the presence of transient (transhumant) pastoralist communities where they occur. At the other extreme they can be considered as important (to those who made or used them) components within permanent settled prehistoric landscapes. The rock carvings are all in the cup-and-ring tradition (Pls 42–50). Their main interest, other than any artistic merit or aura of mystery they may possess, lies in the fact that their distribution pattern coincides with that of known Late Mesolithic occupation sites (Figs 63, 68). They also show continuity of activity within riverside corridors and on or just below interfluve slopes, perhaps across millennia. Cup-marked rocks are frequently located close to round barrows, ring cairns, stone circles — all structures with a funerary purpose.

Furthermore, whereas the age of the cup-and-ring marked rocks is only uncertainly but generally accepted as of the late 3rd and of the earliest 2nd millennium BC, the burnt mounds are generally accepted as of the Middle Bronze Age on the basis of a substantial body of radiocarbon dates from primary excavated contexts, from the timber troughs which are frequently present on these sites (Brindley and Lanting 1990; Ehrenberg 1991).

2. Rock Art (Fig.68; Pls 42–50)

With the exception of some recent finds, all the 'decorated' rock surfaces of Teesdale, Swaledale and the single site in Wensleydale have been drawn by Stan Beckensall and a comprehensive gazetteer of all rock art sites recognised at the end of 1998 is available (Beckensall and Laurie 1998). All the rock art in this area conforms to the general character of cup-and-ring marking as generally understood (Bradley 1997).

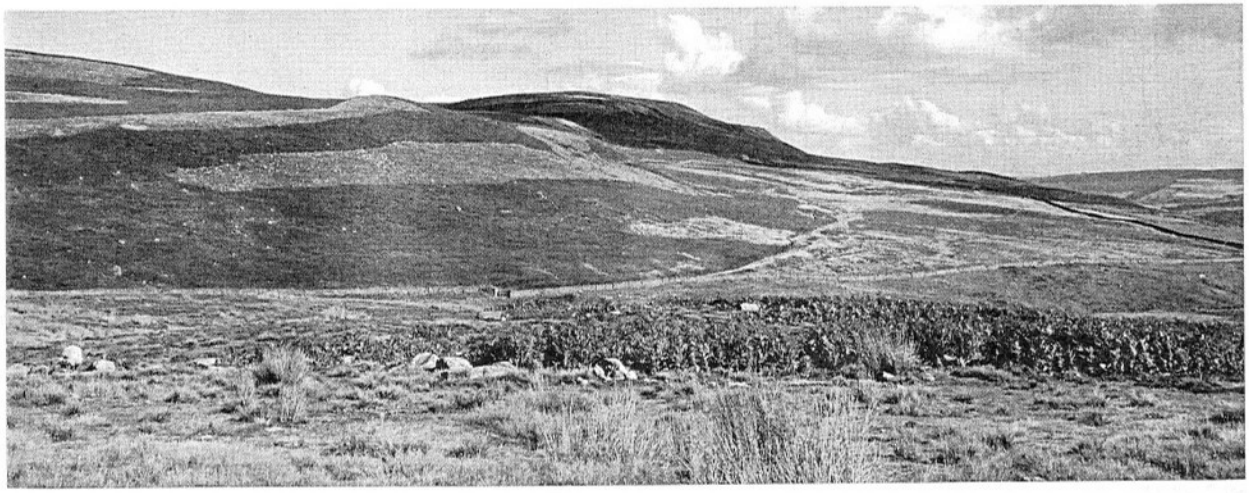

***Plate 39**: Swaledale, Reeth Low Moor. Neolithic occupation site on the upper slopes of Cringley Hill. Undated enclosures, field systems, cairnfield and burnt mounds on lower slope and in pastures above Barney Beck*

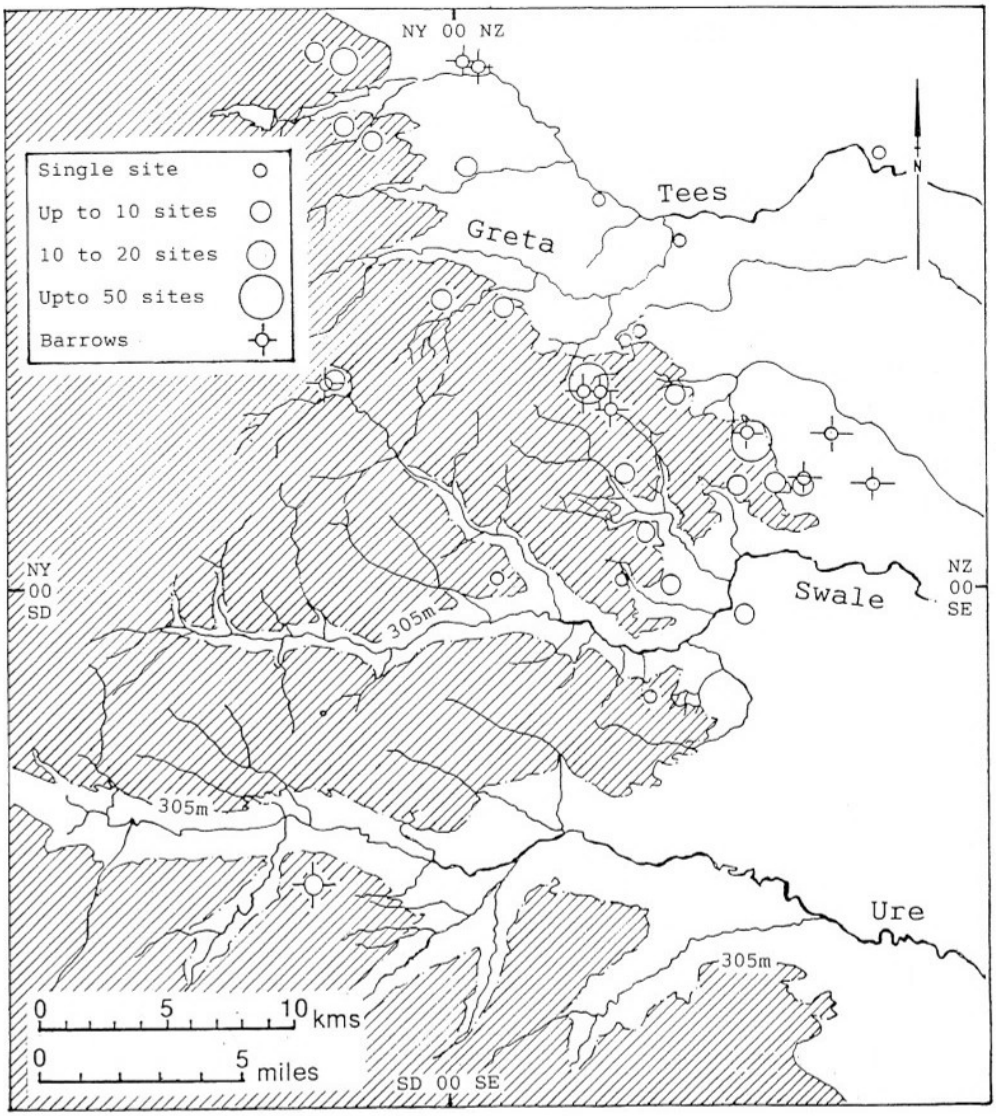

Figure 68: Areas with rock art

Considerable numbers of rock surfaces with cup marks and with cup-and-ring markings have been located on open moorland above 250m OD on the southern edge of Teesdale. Similar rock carvings have been located on gravel terraces or on bluffs overlooking the River Tees. These significant carved rocks found at lower elevations are invariably close by or actually incorporated within the mounds of round barrows, or on the surfaces of isolated slabs of sandstone which were most probably cist grave covers. No rock carvings have been located below about 250m OD at any distance from the River Tees or its tributary streams. A significant number of sites have recently been discovered to the north-east of Eggleston, at Bracken Heads (Brown 1998).

In contrast, there are very few cup-marked rocks in Swaledale except on moorland to the west and north of Marske Beck, on Ellerton Moor, and on Downholme Moor where there are three sites. A single cup-marked stone has been found on Riddings Rigg, Calver Hill, west of Reeth — the only example in upper Swaledale. This small decorated stone is almost certainly from one of the many small rock cairns on Calver. Wensleydale has just one undisputed rock art site, the cup-marked round cairn on the summit of Addlebrough (Pl.42). Significant rock art sites have recently been recognised in Colsterdale (not shown on Fig.68).

The following comments are provided to summarise the conclusions I have reached on the general character of the rock carvings of the area, their distribution and topographical association with other prehistoric structures:

1. The rock art sites are usually in concentrations, i.e. sites are grouped.
2. The more complex designs and individual motifs are always located where the group is large, say over 40 individual rock surfaces; the more complex carved rocks are always at the centre of the group (Pls 43–50).

***Plate 40**: Swaledale, Reeth Low Moor, Cringley Hill. Neolithic chert scrapers and a single flint arrow-point (broken) from a small erosion patch*

***Plate 41**: Wensleydale, Bainbridge, Greenber Edge. Stoney Raise, a large oval cairn of presumed Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age date much reduced by stone robbing. Addlebrough in background across Thornton Mire*

3. The rock art sites located in areas most remote from the Tees lowlands, for example, those recently discovered on Scargill Moor, on Cotherstone Moor and the sites to the north-east of Egglestone are all simple in character: cups, cups with linking or enclosing grooves, cups with just single concentric rings — no multiple ring figures at all.
4. All isolated rock art sites, except those which were probably cist cover slabs or incorporated within round cairns, are simple in execution. All sites in the Swale catchment are simple in execution. In Wensleydale the isolated Addlebrough round cairn possesses slabs decorated with simple cups only, with one faint concentric ring.
5. Isolated sites, at the periphery of the groups or between groups are always simple, i.e. consisting of cups only or cups with grooves or cups with one concentric ring only (Pl.47).
6. All rock art sites are on open ground with wide views today. However, the sites may have been within a woodland environment when made. The one exceptional site is the single triple concentric ring figure made on an inclined slab of sandstone at the base of scree within Osmond's Gill on Barningham Moor.
7. Small boulders, portable stones, may be decorated with complex concentric ring figures, i.e. with cups and multiple rings. However, these portable stones are found within the vicinity of or incorporated within the body of round barrows or distinctive glacial mounds which could have served the purpose of an artificial mound (Pl.48). Portable stones with complex decoration are found in areas with simple rock art, as at Munn End above Marske Beck in Swaledale (Pls 49–51).
8. Cup-marked stones and small boulders with more complex designs have been found on or in the immediate vicinity of round cairns and prominent barrow-like mounds which are likely to be of glacial origin, in the following locations (Figs 68, 71):

Wensleydale

1) Bainbridge, Addlebrough SD946882, 476m OD

Teesdale

2) Aske, NZ178041, 150m OD
3) Whashton, Stoneygate Bank NZ145067, 150m OD
4) Whashton, Silver Hill NZ138039, 290m OD (Pl.48)
5) Gayles, Hill 99 NZ115063, 315m OD (Pls 44–7)
6) Newsham, Frankinshaw How NZ062068, 430m OD
7) Barningham, How Tallon NZ057074, 447m OD
8) Barningham, Above Osmonds Gill NZ054072, 430m OD
9) Romaldkirk, Balderfoot NZ013202, 211m OD
10) Romaldkirk, Gueswick Hills NZ005211, 220m OD

(information from Paul Brown)

The rock art can be, and often is, located in the vicinity of other structures of probable Bronze Age date, with round barrows, ring cairns and burnt mounds; for example, on Skelton Moor in Swaledale (Laurie 1985), on Gayles Moor and on Barningham

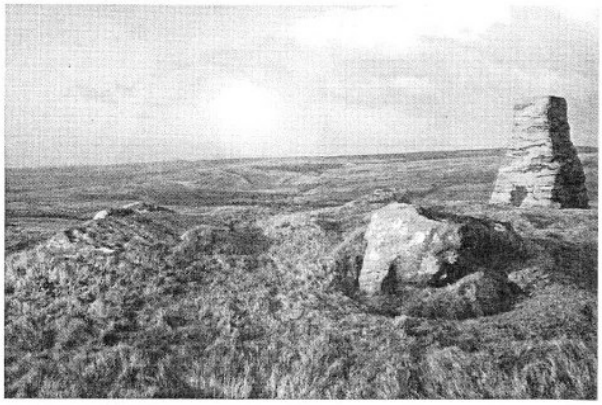

***Plate 42**: Wensleydale, Bainbridge, Addlebrough summit cairn. Cup-marked rocks visible now but once concealed within the body of the cairn which is much reduced by stone removal*

***Plate 43**: Teesdale, Gayles Moor. Army firing range. Cup-and-ring marked rock in foreground. Hill 99, a prominent glacial mound or possible round barrow now tree covered in middle distance – a focus for the rock art in this area, perhaps*

***Plate 44**: Teesdale, Gayles Moor. Cup and ring marked rock at base of Hill 99*

***Plate 45**: Teesdale, Gayles Moor. Cup-and-ring marked rock, very complex design*

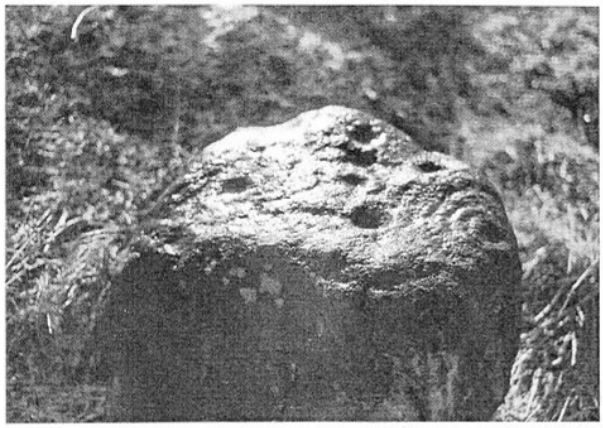

***Plate 48**: Teesdale, Silver Hill. Small boulder with complex design of cup and rings found on modern wall crossing this prominent mound which is glacial in origin although probably serving as a burial mound*

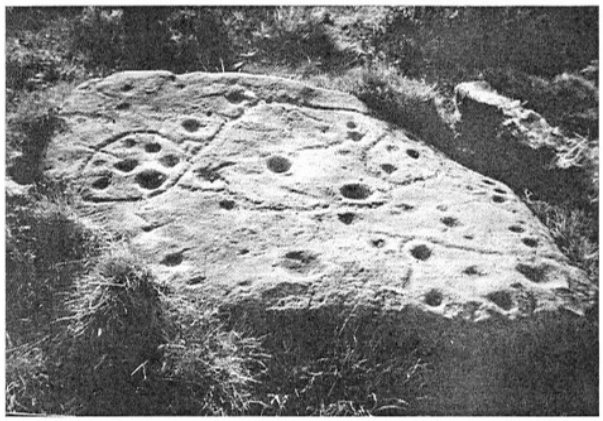

***Plate 46**: Teesdale, Gayles Moor. Cup-and-ring marked rock complex design with simple cup marks and grooved enclosures*

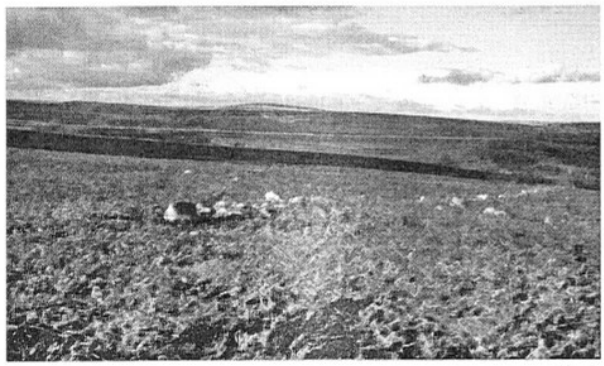

***Plate 49**: Swaledale, Skelton Moor. Co-axial field boundary visible as a bank of bleached rocks on recently burnt heather moor. Holgate How with summit round barrow and cup-and-ring marked rocks on lower slopes in distance beyond Munn End*

***Plate 47**: Teesdale, Gayles Moor. Simple cup marks on boulders like this example occur at the periphery of groups of decorated rock surfaces in Teesdale. Rock surfaces with complex decoration are found at the centre of a group*

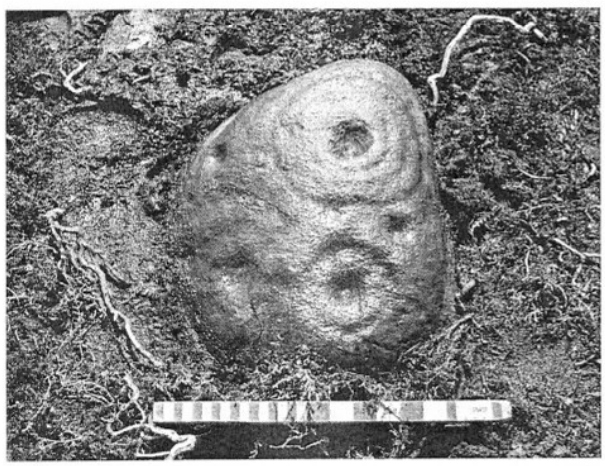

***Plate 50**: Swaledale, Marske, Munn End. Portable boulder with complex design of cup and rings. Small boulders like these are usually found within the body of round barrows or cairns. This example found on open heather moorland almost certainly came from one of several small damaged burial mounds higher up on the summit of Munn End*

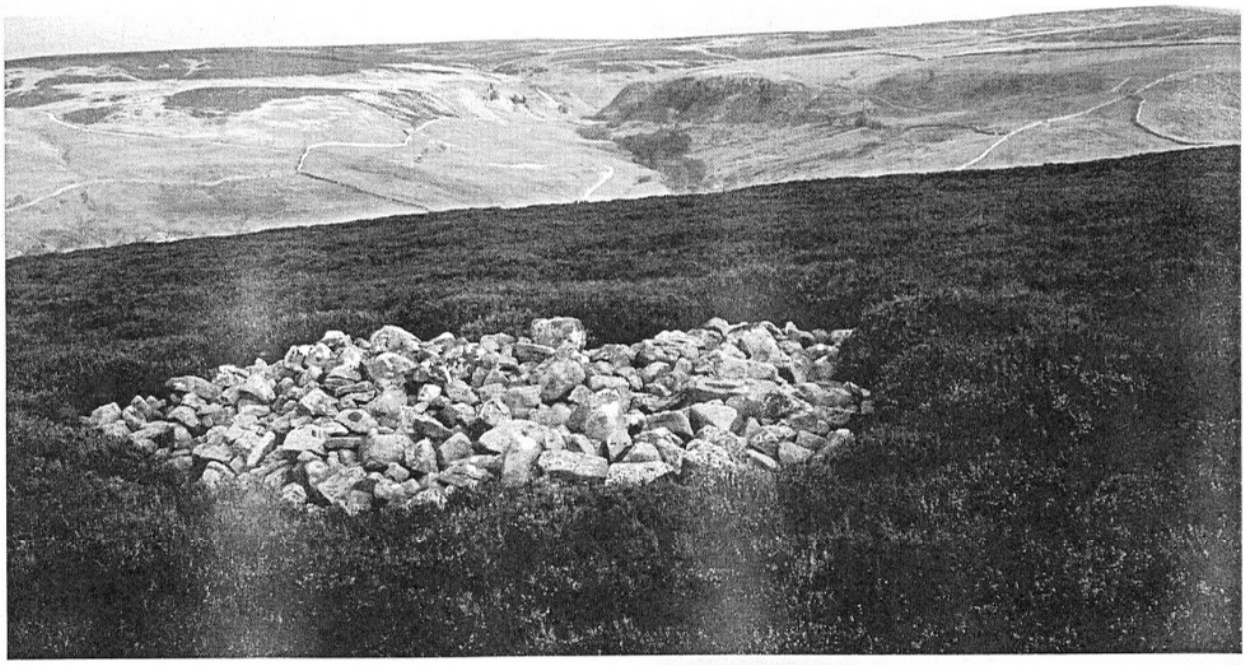

Plate 51: Swaledale, view north towards Barningham High Moor from Moresdale Ridge. Lithic finds from erosion patches above springs on the Swale-Tees/Greta interfluve are indicative of contact and exchange between different social groups whose territory was based on river catchments (Spikins 1995). See Pls 37–8 for representative artefacts from this area. Bronze Age round cairn in foreground

Moor in Teesdale. Equally, the rock art has not been found in other areas where there are abundant traces of probable Bronze Age settlement, at Ravock, Bowes, Teesdale, for example.

9. Surprisingly, no rock art sites have been located on the Stainmore Pass, although the stone circle at Mudbeck (NY954077), on the south-east approaches to Stainmore (Curtis 1988, 375, fig.16.15) is cup marked (one stone, one cup) and a further small cup-marked rock has been found some 50m to the south-west of the stone ring.

10. The distribution of the rock art closely compares with that of the areas with Late Mesolithic occupation. Both rock art sites and Late Mesolithic occupation are found close to the River Tees and are concentrated at or just below the Tees–Greta–Swale interfluve (watershed) also, as predicted by Penny Spikins (1996), in the context of activity during the Mesolithic. However, the Mesolithic sites are located to the south of the watershed ridge, on Barningham High Moor, whereas the rock art sites are located to the north of the ridge, on Barningham Low Moor, or on the How Tallon ridge itself.

11. To conclude, the pattern of the distribution of the rock art sites indicates that a hierarchy of the locations existed, with the more complex designs being made only within the most concentrated areas and remote areas only having simple designs.

The coincidence of distribution of the rock art (Fig.68) and the areas preferred for Mesolithic occupation can be accepted as indicative of continuity of use by both aboriginal hunters and the first pastoralists of a natural access route from the coast to the uplands and of a natural boundary, the Tees–Swale interfluve, as a meeting place for exchange and communication by adjacent communities; tribes whose territories were formed by the Tees and Swale River catchments throughout several millennia (Pl.51). This does not conflict with the view that the main aggregation areas and settlements throughout prehistoric time were located on the sheltered terraces of the Tees.

3. Burnt Mounds in Wensleydale, Swaledale and Teesdale (Figs 69–70; Pls 52–4) Gazetteer

3.1 Introduction

The burnt mounds are today highly consolidated and usually wholly vegetated, i.e. covered with turf and soil or peat and heather. Where erosion of the turf or peat has occurred, for example by stream erosion or where the heather/peat cover has been burned off or removed by wind erosion, the burnt stone core of the mound is revealed. The mounds can usually be recognised from a distance since their vegetation, heather, sedge, grasses, bleaberry or bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), mosses (especially *Polytrichum* sp.) and lichen (esp. *Cladonia*) — contrast greatly with the marsh or wet pasture where the mounds are located. The mounds are dark in appearance, although in August, they can appear as purple islands of heather in a brown marsh.

The mounds in this area conform in all respects to the type site found elsewhere throughout upland (and lowland) Britain. They are usually circular or crescentic on plan, and a single site can be composed of three

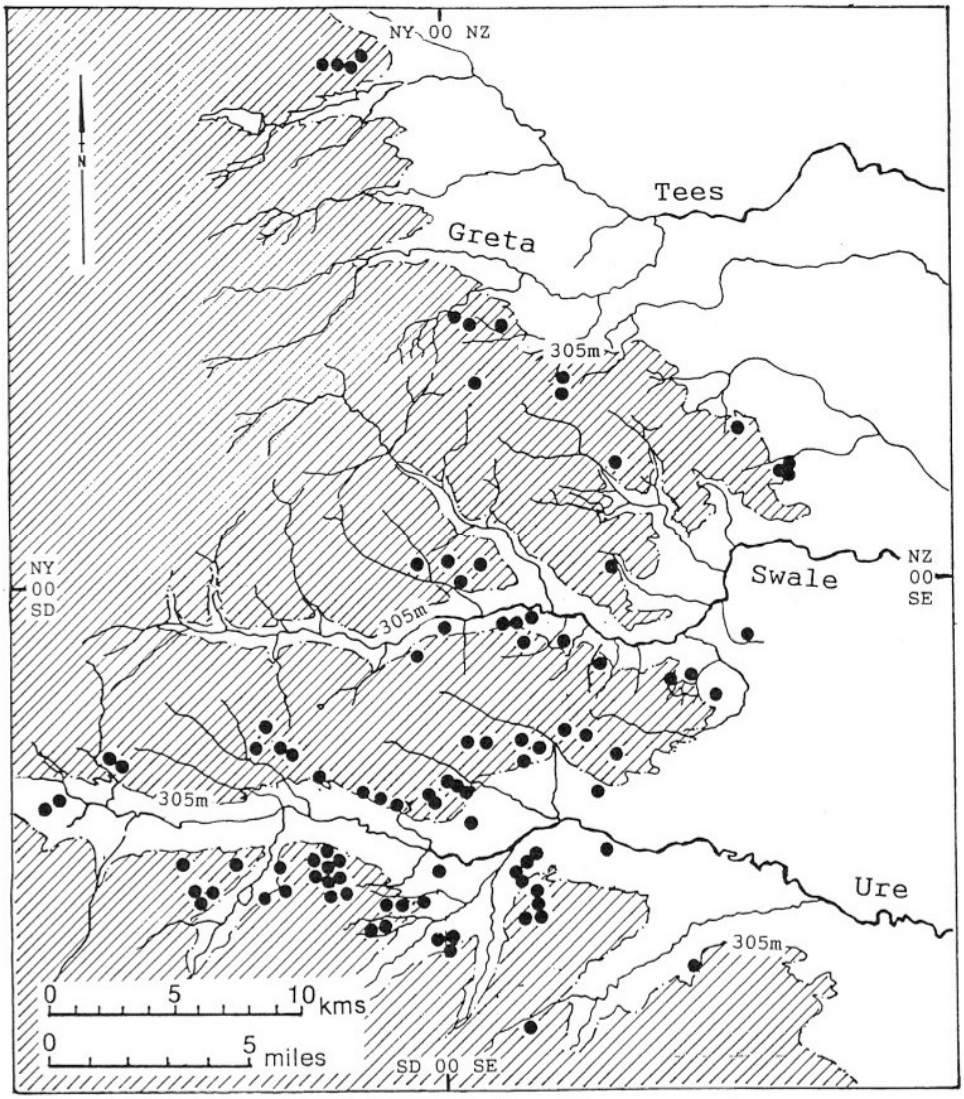

Figure 69: Distribution of burnt mounds

or four mounds around a central depression that can be considered to be the position of the trough. A few sites e.g. that at New Pasture on Carperby Moor and that near the Tees below Cronkley Crag, take the form of a ring bank of varying height around a central level area of 5m diameter or so. Occasional orthostatic rocks protrude through the turf to indicate the presence of hearths or other structures. Very large sites often have levelled tops or a level circular interior. I quickly realised that the siting of the mounds could be predicted: most are located at or above 250m OD, all sites without exception are on the banks of small streams (or sykes) usually at or just below the spring line. Sometimes the spring has been diverted or has moved to a different rise, often controlled for a farm or public water supply. In all these instances the old stream line can be recognised. The burnt mounds are located at predictable intervals, usually at not more than 1–2km on the upper dale terraces and often in pairs or groups of sites (nine on Thornton Rust Moor). These intervals correspond to the distribution of the present-day settlements and this prompts the question whether the distribution of the mounds relates to that of the contemporary, Middle Bronze Age, settlements.

For some time during the fieldwork I considered that all sites were located on the higher dale pastures (Pl.52). However, a few sites have now been found at low elevations just above the river floodplain. An example is the large burnt mound in West Witton at Low Wanless springs (SE06728905, 130m OD).

Burnt mounds are formed by the gradual accrual of fire-fractured stone following the immersion of hot stones in a trough (or other container) to heat water, or after water has been thrown on to the hot rocks to produce of steam inside a shelter or tent.

Conventional interpretation for the use of these sites has always been as cooking places, based upon the use in historic time of similar methods for cooking deer following a successful hunt (O'Riordain 1942). Burnt mounds, or *fullacht fiadh*, are the most frequent

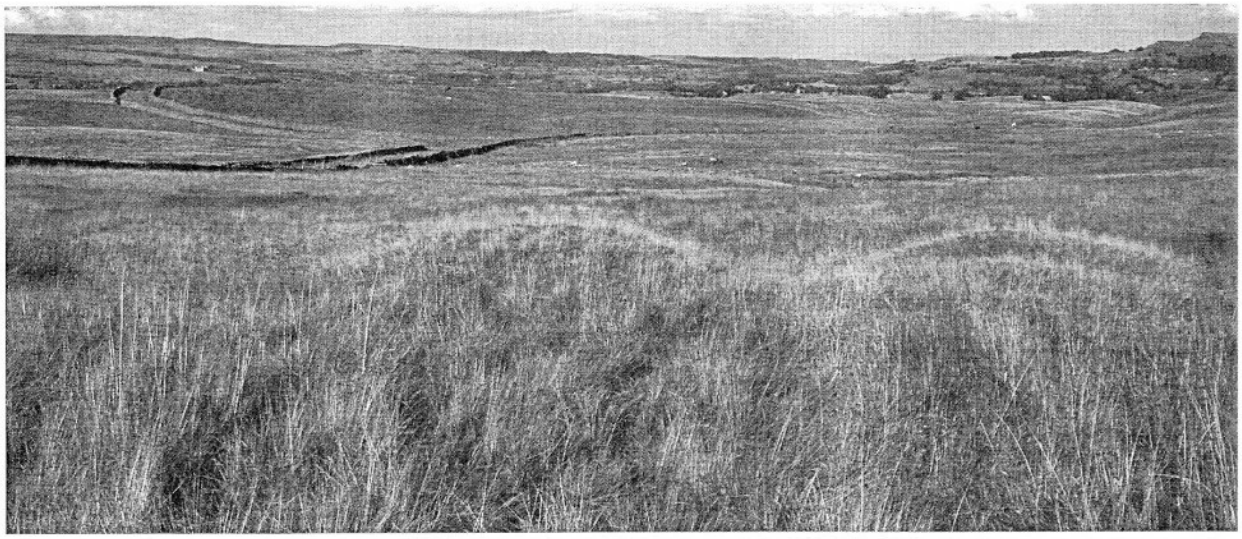

Plate 52: Wensleydale, Thoralby, Haw Beck Springs. Burnt mound, one of two sites at this location just 750m WSW of Castle Dykes henge which is visible from the burnt mounds

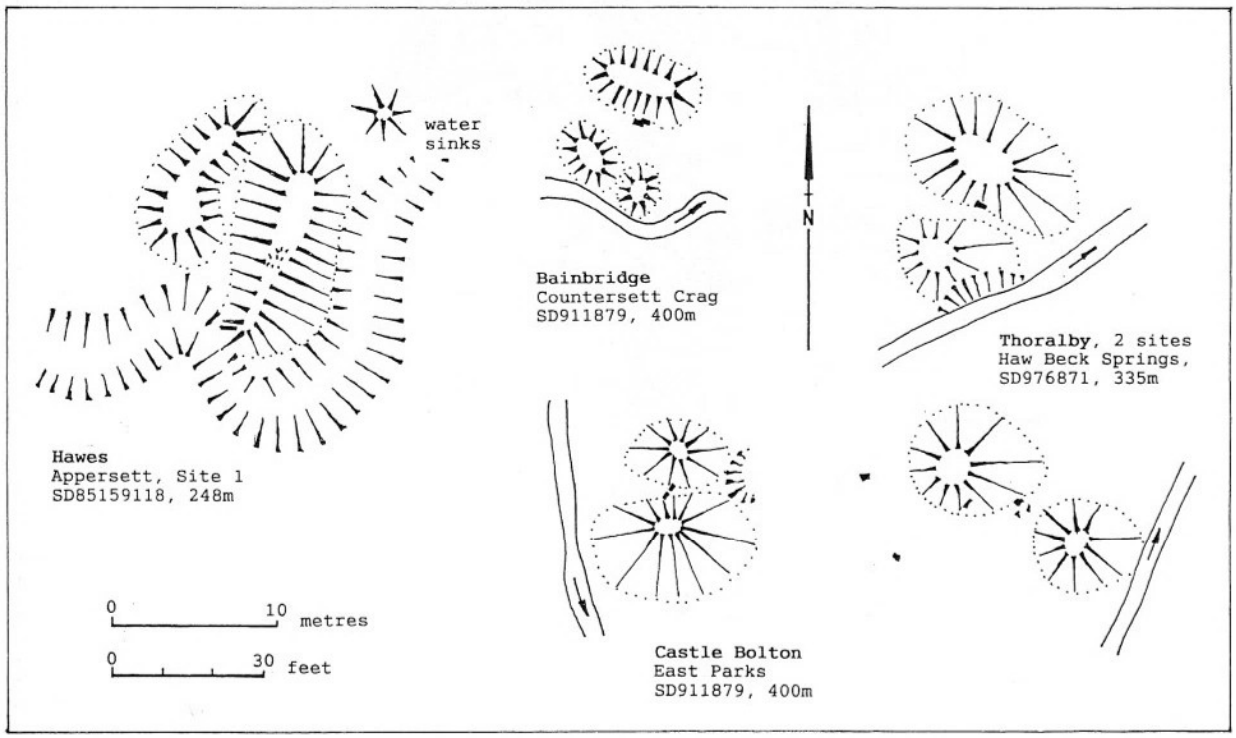

Figure 70: Site plans of burnt mounds in Wensleydale (see Fig.72 for geophysical survey of Appersett Site 1)

class of prehistoric site in Ireland, where many thousands have been recognised. Many such sites are now known to exist where targeted fieldwork has been completed throughout upland Britain, but the first such sites were, however, recognised in Birmingham (Barfield and Hodder 1981). There is no archaeological evidence for the sites referred to in Irish historic literature, but many of the Irish sites and many mainland sites throughout Britain have been excavated. All reliable radiocarbon dates obtained to date from the timber trough linings are of the 2nd millennium BC (Brindley and Lanting 1990). Barfield and Hodder have argued, convincingly for me, that the burnt mounds were sweathouses or bathing places, not cooking places (Barfield and Hodder 1987; Hodder and Barfield 1991). Their basis for this interpretation was the total absence of domestic debris, pottery or bone, which would be expected on a cooking site. However, the most convincing reason provided for the interpretation of these sites as sweathouse/saunas is,

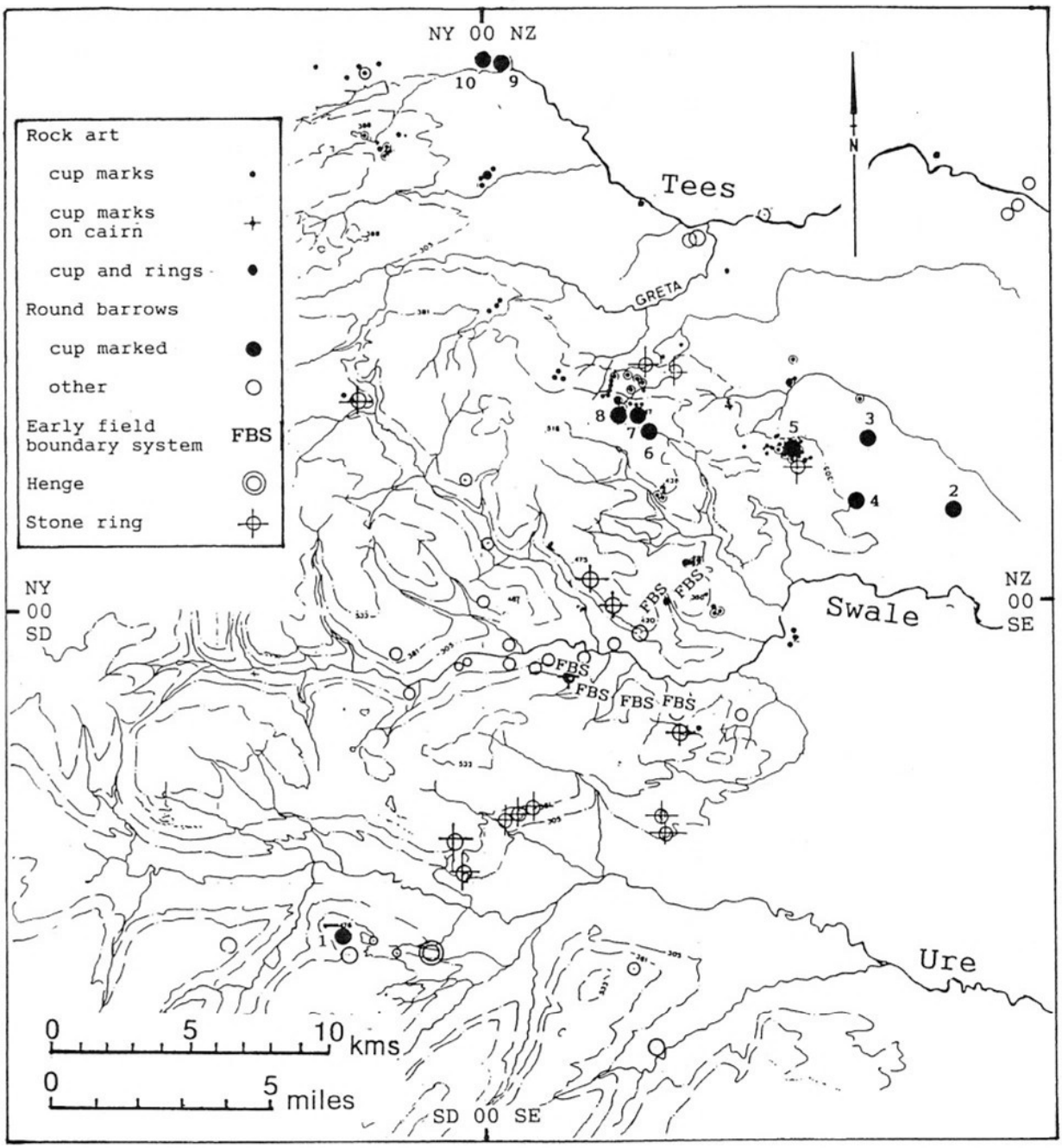

Figure 71: Prehistoric sites between the Swale and Tees. For location of nos 1–10 see p.240

for me, that of recent ethnography. In brief, there is evidence for the use of sweathouse/saunas throughout northern latitudes and perhaps the most informative eye-witness account of the use of sweathouses by Mandan Indians, a North American Plains Indian tribe, is provided by George Catlin (Mooney 1975).

Several sites show evidence for a shelter or tented structure, in the form of a levelled top to the mound, sometimes with an outer rim, as at High Force, Bainbridge. Where the mound is on sharply sloping ground a level stance would be necessary. A few sites are in the form of annular ring mounds — the circular enclosed space reflecting a circular structure — and may have accrued from material discarded from beneath a tented structure reflecting the perimeter of the shelter. It can be assumed that small tepee-like structures would be necessary as shelters or for use of the sites as sweathouses or saunas.

The recent recognition of very many burnt mound sites throughout Wensleydale, and significant numbers of these sites with a slightly more restricted distribution within Swaledale and across Teesdale, has

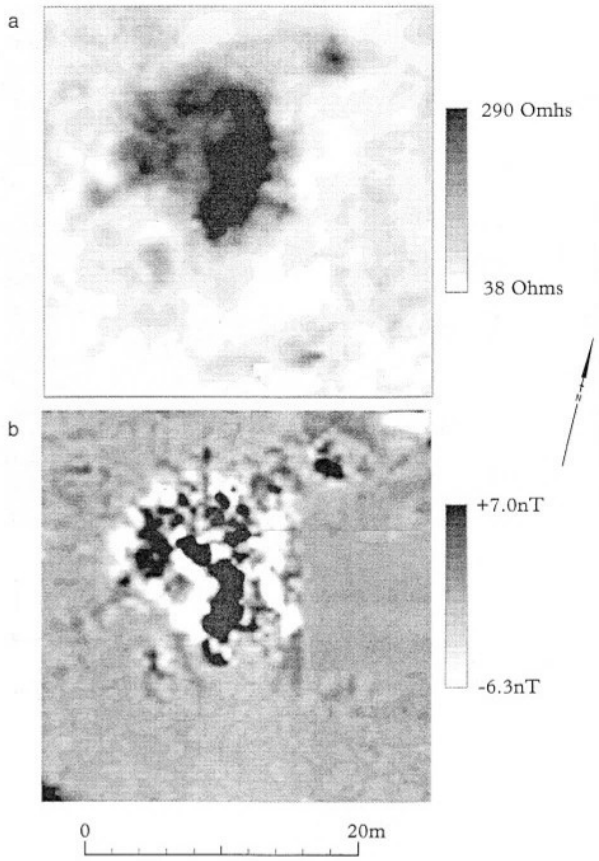

Figure 72: Geophysical survey results from a burnt mound at Appersett, North Yorkshire. Survey area 30m × 30m at a resolution of 0.5m × 0.5m: a) RM15 0.5m twin-probe earth resistance; b) FM36 fluxgate gradiometer (for plan see Fig.70)

introduced a new horizon of human activity during the Bronze Age for consideration and discussion.

No site has yet been excavated in Wensleydale or in Swaledale, although one site in Upper Teesdale, at Strands Gill on Holwick Fell has been partially excavated (Coggins 1986, fig.15,16). The finds from this burnt mound included a broken polished stone axe, flints 'of Neolithic aspect' and much charcoal (D. Coggins, pers. comm.).

Burnt mounds as a generic form may be accepted as dating from the Late Neolithic to the Late Bronze Age — to the 2nd and early 1st millennium BC (Brindley and Lanting 1990). Margaret Ehrenberg (1991) correlated the distribution of burnt mounds with finds of Middle Bronze Age metalwork, basing her discussion on the fact that, *without exception*, all radiocarbon dated sites (from secure contexts, from the timber trough-linings only, from excavated contexts) were of 2nd millennium BC date, with most sites being of the Middle Bronze Age. Further determinations from excavated sites are now available, notably in Northumberland (Topping 1998). There is no reason to change the assumption made here that these sites are of 2nd millennium BC age. In conclusion, the importance of the burnt mounds for future research may lie with their potential as indicators of contemporary settlements that have left no other surface trace. Secondly, the highly compacted mounds will protect an ancient land surface, often in a wet situation, which can provide an opportunity for the investigation of the environment contemporary with the initial use of the sites.

Finally, the excavations of burnt mounds elsewhere have been targeted at the mounds themselves and only to a limited extent to the vicinity of the mounds. A geophysical survey of a 30m × 30m area around the burnt mound at Appersett, Site 1 (SD85159118, 248m OD; Fig.72) in Hawes, by the University of Bradford, revealed anomalies (hot spots!) beyond the mounds themselves.

4. The Later Prehistoric Sites on Carperby Moor and above Redmire (Fig.61)

I shall describe the later lithic finds and prehistoric sites on Carperby Moor, above Redmire and on Preston Moor (Fig.61) since this area is relatively unfamiliar to archaeologists. The monuments include eighteen burnt mounds, five ring cairns (RC1–5), one free-standing stone circle (SC1) and one embanked stone circle (SC2) (Raistrick 1929b) within the early (undated) field system on Oxclose.

The principal landowner, the Bolton Estate, have recently initiated a programme of research intended to record the ancient landscape of the area.

Following a description of the general character and distribution of the sites found within this area, I shall provide a brief comment on the ring cairns which are a significant feature of this landscape.

4.1 Lithic scatters

There are sufficient stray finds of later prehistoric arrow-points, including leaf and barbed and tanged forms, of scrapers and a plano-convex knife (Fig.60) to indicate Neolithic or Early Bronze Age hunting activity across the higher terraces and on the open moorland above the higher limestone scars.

First evidence for more settled occupation of these terraces and the moorland takes the form of the stone circles, ring cairns, cairnfields and burnt mounds recently recognised during fieldwalking by Robin Minnitt and myself and introduced here for the first time.

4.2 The early field systems, isolated round barrows and cairnfields (areas with small cairns)

Early field boundary systems and stone walled settlements which survive above 305m OD (above the highly cultivated medieval landscape of the lower slopes) from Beldon Beck, Bolton West Parks to Coombs extend to an elevation of 400m above Blue Scar to the west of Thackthwaite Beck. The embanked stone circle (Raistrick 1929b, SC2) is sited within the field system on Oxclose. A second circular enclosure is located immediately east of SC2, in the next prehistoric field,

but in this instance the field bank is tangential to the western perimeter of the enclosure. There are very few isolated cairns, there is one low cairn at Oxclose Gate (SD996903) and there are two on Preston Pasture (SE065919, SE 072924).

However, there are several areas with small cairns. The first of these is on Oxclose, on open pasture where there are four 5m diameter cairns in a linear setting on a north-facing slope 200m to the south-west of the embanked stone circle (SC2) and three more in a line 100m to the south of the ring, these are almost certainly burial cairns, not clearance. The second area with cairns is at West Bolton Parks, immediately west and north of RC2 and 3. Here the cairns are small and scattered on south-facing pasture and heather moor. The association of small cairns, ring cairns, fragmentary field banks and the two burnt mounds below Bull Scar (BM9 and 10) is interesting and has parallels elsewhere, in Ireland (Moore 1995), on Moor Divock in the Lake District where I have recently recognised two burnt mounds in the vicinity of the Cockpit embanked circle, and in the study area also, for example at Thorny Bank Hill above Redmire (see below), and at Harkermires, on Harkerside in Swaledale. A third area with small cairns is 400m to the west of Beldon Beck (SE007915, 315m OD). Here, a group of not less than twenty stone cairns are grouped together. These cairns are from 3m to 8m in diameter, several are completely circular and the two largest have definite surrounding ditches and are close together but not quite conjoined. These cairns are also within the same co-axial field system which extends from Coombs (SD971915), 4km to the west, beyond Oxclose, and which is of very considerable extent. The field system may or may not be of similar age as the stone cairns and the embanked circle. Received thinking must dictate that these high field systems are most probably of Late Iron Age, Romano-British or of medieval date. However, until firm evidence is available for the dating of these fields, an open mind must be maintained. Cairns are occasionally incorporated within field banks and the stone ring-works, the ring cairns and embanked circle, are of identical construction to the field banks. The ring cairns are almost certainly contemporary with the small cairns and fragmentary field clearance banks which occur in their vicinity. There are few cairnfields in Wensleydale, none south of the Ure, in contrast to Swaledale, where groups of small cairns are very widespread (Laurie 1985).

The age of these extensive co-axial fields is unknown in Wensleydale and present a problem that can only be resolved by detailed survey and carefully targeted excavation. Rather similar field systems on Calverside in Swaledale have been examined by excavation (Fleming and Laurie 1985–1994) and are of several periods of construction, The later of two field systems on Riddings Rigg, the Healaugh system, has been dated to the 3rd century BC. The earlier and more substantial Reeth system must be very much earlier, as it was abandoned and forgotten when the Healaugh system was constructed.

4.3 The burnt mounds

There are three very large sites on open pasture to the north of Castle Bolton (Pl.53), two at spring rises below Bull Scar, a group of three smaller sites on the west bank of the stream outflow from Locker Tarn, one large and one medium site at the entrance to the defile below Wegber Scar (to the east of Peatmoor Lane) — where there is also a small group of stone-walled

***Plate 53**: Wensleydale, Castle Bolton, East Parks. Burnt mound, one of three sites within Bolton East Parks*

enclosures and several hut circles. Further west, there is a burnt mound beside a controlled spring within the lead mining area at Beldaw Hill (not to be confused with the bell pits, shallow mine shafts which are of eroding shale) and a very large burnt mound, gorse covered at springs rising below Coombs. The westernmost field boundary is 20m east of this burnt mound. Above Redmire and on Preston Moor there are four burnt mounds (Pl.54); the site below Redmire Scar is very large, those on Preston Moor overlook the area with Mesolithic and Neolithic flint scatters, and the two sites at Thornybank Hill and at Grasper Bank Spring are just above an area with small cairns, fragmentary field banks and a substantial ring cairn.

Recent radiocarbon dates from two excavated burnt mounds at Titlington Mount Farm, Beanley, North Northumberland demonstrate the use and accrual of these mounds over a period of several centuries, commencing at about 2000 BC (Topping 1998). The majority of the 112 burnt mounds recognised to date are large — average 6–10m diameter and many are very large, from 10–18m diameter and average 1m or more in height. The largest may comprise 400 tonnes of highly compacted fire-cracked rock fragments. Thus, the burnt mounds represent a horizon of very considerable human activity — of whatever nature, which can be assigned to the 2nd millennium BC.

4.4 The stone circles and ring cairns

The five standing stones which survive, forming the free-standing stone ring above Thackthwaite Beck (Fig.73), are all substantial slabs of sandstone, not blocks, and are low — just visible above the thick heather which masks them at present. A further stone is not certainly set in the ground and may not be an element of the circle. There are no other stones visible at present and no indication of a bank. The circle is an oval with long and short axes of 17m and 13m respectively.

The location of the circle is characteristic of these structures elsewhere in the Pennines, at the top of a steep heather-covered slope falling towards the spring which is the source of Thackthwaite Beck, some 200m to the south-west. The location does not directly overlook or relate to Wensleydale although the Ure is just visible far below. The circle does relate to the area of moorland to the north-east rather than to the main dale. There is a possible round barrow, heather covered, at the head of the defile, Peat Moor Lane (SD994914), 600m to the north-east, otherwise there are no other prehistoric sites in the vicinity.

The embanked circle on Oxclose, below Ivy Scar described by Dr Raistrick (1929b) (Fig.73) consists of a 2m–3m wide bank of stones occasionally revetted on the inner face with large orthostatic rocks, now mostly fallen. Other large rocks lie prostrate on the bank; the outer face is not obviously kerbed. A small, disturbed, stone cairn is central to this enclosure. There is no entrance.

All the ring cairns in Wensleydale (Fig.61) are approximately 15–20m diameter overall, with banks of 2m–3m width at the least. The banks are *always* of stone dump construction, occasionally revetted with facing stones on both internal and external perimeters. These are usually quarried out where the site is close to recent field walls. There are no visible entrances to these sites.

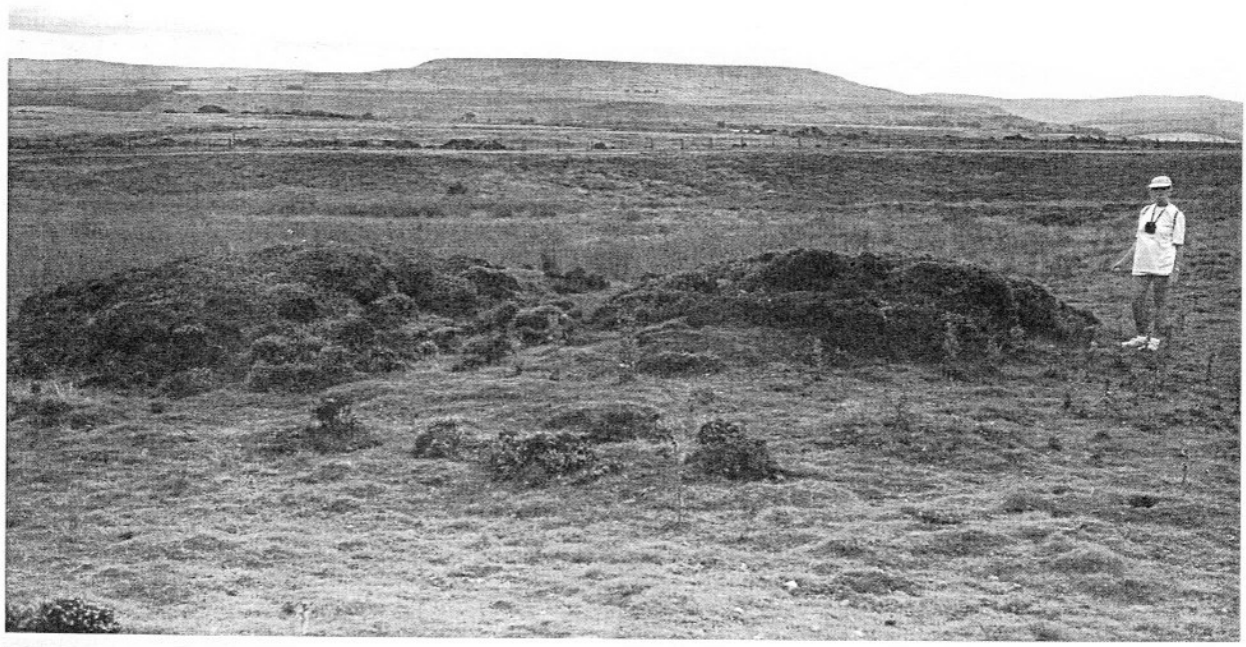

***Plate 54**: Wensleydale, Preston Moor, Stopmore Rake. Burnt mound characteristic double crescentic mound, heather covered at abandoned spring*

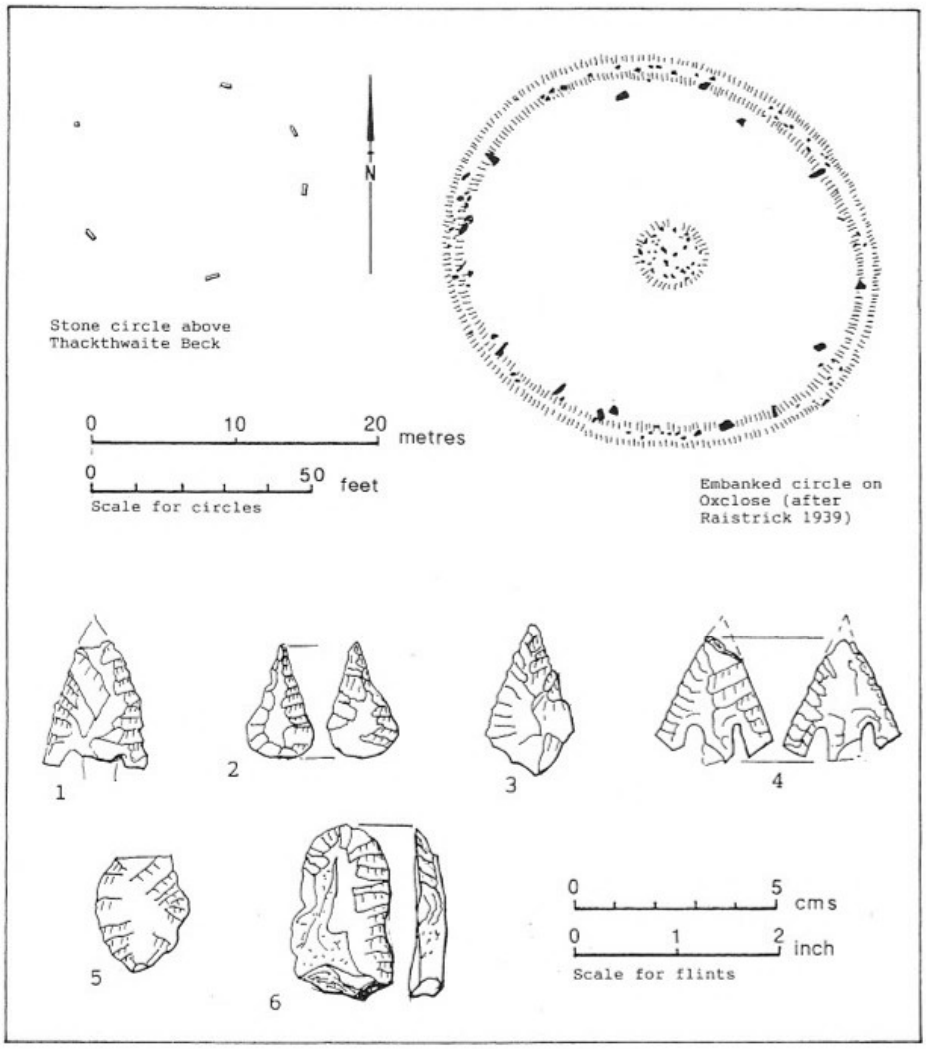

Figure 73: Stone circle above Thackthwaite Beck, embanked circle on Oxclose (after Raistrick 1939) and stray lithic finds from Carperby Moor (1–6)

Thus the ring cairns are essentially of stone or boulder construction, which is the same method used to construct stone burial cairns. The ring cairns are thus of cairn construction although in the form of closed banks. The banks are usually, although not always wide in relation to the area enclosed. The writer does not now consider that the coursed limestone walled ring and internal mound on Scout Crag is prehistoric.

Acknowledgements

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Finally, I express my gratitude to Mr Harry Orde-Powlett of Bolton Castle for access to the Bolton Estate, without which this article would not have been possible.

Gazetteer of Burnt Mound Sites: Wensleydale, Swaledale and Teesdale

BURNT MOUNDS PARISH AND SITE NAME	GRID REF, ALTITUDE OD	APPROX. SIZE, HEIGHT	DESCRIPTION and NOTES
		Key: Any dim. Small <6m Medium 6m–9m Large 10m–15m Low <0.5m Average 0.5m–1m High >1m	All sites are of proved fire-fractured stone composition unless described as probable. Type sites conform to the usual morphology for these sites. They are crescent-shaped with a central depression which may be the trough. Type sites are the best preserved, the most prominent and most suitable to visit
WENSLEYDALE			
EAST WITTON			
Witton Fell Springs, 2 sites	SE1375 8448, 308m	Large, high and large average	Both sites at the same spring rise. Type site
CALDBERGH WITH EAST SCRAFTON			
Ings Farm, Town Spring	SE100845, 295m	Large, average	Turf covered. Much visible charcoal. Reported by R.F. White
WEST SCRAFTON No sites located			
CARLTON HIGHDALE No sites located			
CARLTON TOWN			
Howden Lodge 1 site	SE041846, 430m	Large, average	In marsh. Cut by drain
MELMERBY			
Wraykeld Well Spring, 2 sites	SE06798685, 355m	Large, low Medium, low	The large site has been disturbed by water supply work. The lower, medium site is turf covered
COVERHAM WITH AGGLETHORPE No sites located			
MIDDLEHAM No fieldwork			
WEST WITTON			
Low Wanless Springs	SE06728905, 130m	Large, high	Very low elevation, type site
BURTON CUM WALDEN			
Morpeth Scar, 3 sites	SE027874, 248m	Small, low	Three sites on same diverted spring. One site re-used as lead bail. Type site. Both sites at springs
Morpeth Wood, 2 sites	SE029880, 230m	Medium, average	
BURTON CUM WALDEN			
Below Ashby Gill 2 sites	SE031863, 370m	Small, low Medium average	On open pasture
Burton Moor 2 sites	SE033863, 460m (centre)	Small, low Medium, low	Next spring opening from Ashby Gill 200m west of settlement. Both sites difficult to find, turf covered
NEWBIGGIN			
Millbeck Springs 3 sites	SE000853, 280m (centre)	One large, high Two medium, average	The large site is east of Millbeck on the N. bank of an old spring stream now diverted as a water supply. One medium site is on the opposite bank of the same channel. The other site is on the W. bank of Millbeck
BISHOPDALE No sites located			
THORALBY			
Skelliks Beck 2 sites	SD978858, 330m (centre)	Two medium, average	Both sites on same spring stream above N. bank of Skelliks Beck
Haw Beck Springs	SD976871, 335m	Two large, high	Castle Dykes henge is visible 800m to the east. Settlement and field system to NW. Type site. See Fig.70
AYSGARTH			
Keld Springs 2 sites	SD998883, 302m	Two medium, average	At spring above quarry
Aysgarth Pasture 1 site	SD990877, 275m	Large, average	In pasture, N. bank of canalised spring
THORNTON RUST			
Addlebrough East 2 sites	SD95268783	Medium, average	At spring
	SD95238776	Medium, low	At spring

Gazetteer (*cont'd*)

Dovestones 6 sites	SD965874, 335m (centre)	All medium, average	All sites are on the banks of spring streams above and below the shooting hut, small stone rings nearby.
Black Pasture 2 sites	SD963869, 342m (centre)		Fine flint arrowheads found on slope S. of shooting hut
1 site at	SD964868, 342m		
BAINBRIDGE			
Blean Lane	SD932888, 290m	Three small, low	In wet pasture, a group of small sites
High Force Farm	SD933875, 310m	Large, high	On spring line, the mound has a flat top with a raised rim. For a structure?
High Blean	SD87169274, 300m	Medium, high	West bank of stream near road
Countersett Crag	SD911879, 400m	Large, high	At spring rise, see site plan (Fig.70)
Above Wood End Lodge	SD905874, 410m	Two medium, average	All three sites at springs
3 sites	(centre)	One small, average	
HAWES			
Appersett Site 1	SD85159118, 248m	Large, high	Type site, see site plan (Fig.70). Found by Mrs Susan Foster
Site 2	SD84929114, 255m	Medium, average	At spring below railway spoil heap
Burtersett High Pasture	SD894884, 400m	Large, high	Eroded by stream
HIGH ABBOTSIDE			
High Shaw Gill, Hardraw	SD866922, 310m	Medium, average	In pasture. East of main beck, on bank of small streams
2 sites			
LOW ABBOTSIDE			
No fieldwork			
ASKRIGG			
Leashouse	SD942920, 305m	Small, low	All these sites are on the banks of spring streams in wet pasture, no other prehistoric sites in the vicinity except that the site below Coombs is at the western limit of a co-axial field system
Whitfield Gill	SD935923, 360m	Large, high	
Askrigg Pasture	SD937925, 383m	Medium, average	
	SD936925, 387m	Large, average	
	SD935928, 425m	Large, high	
Nappa Scar	SD965915, 320m	Large, low	
Coombs	SD971915, 350m	Large, high	Gorse covered. Type site
Beldaw Hill	SD977910, 330m	Medium, average	In mining ground. Type site
CARPERBY CUM THORESBY			
Wegber, Peat Moor Lane			
Site 1	SD996910, 348m	Large, high	Stone-founded roundhouse foundations and enclosures nearby, below Wegber
Site 2	SD997910, 346m	Medium, low	
New Pasture	SD994905, 315m	Large, medium	Annular bank around a level interior. Entrance to north
Low Gate Pasture	SE010908, 255m	Small, low	Found by Robin Minnitt
CASTLE BOLTON WITH EAST AND WEST BOLTON			
Below Locker Tarn 3 sites	SE007916, 318m	Medium, low	Cairns and field system nearby
Bull Scar Site 1	SE011929, 400m	Large, high	Ring cairns (two) in plantation to SE
Site 2		Medium, low	
East Parks	SE03529254	Large, high	Type site, see site plan (Fig.70)
	SE03639318	Large, high	The sites at East Parks are all in wet pasture on open ground
	SE03929297	Large, high	
REDMIRE			
Thorny Bank Hill	SE047934, 380m	Medium, low	Ring cairn, small cairns and field banks nearby
Cobscar Rake–Grasper Bank Spring	SE052932, 375m	Large, high	At spring rise
PRESTON UNDER SCAR			
Stopmore Rake	SE067930, 340m	Medium, average	At abandoned spring
Redmire Scar	SE058919, 280m	Large, high	On steep slope below limestone scar
SWALEDALE			
WALBURN			
Spring Gill	SE11169486, 260m	Large, average	On army range, 200m west of Boston Reservoir. At spring above north bank of Spring Gill
STAINTON			
Wathgill, Cow Park	SE104954, 260m	Medium, average	On army range, at spring rise
Stainton Moor, The White Bog	SE094958, 260m	Large, high	Part quarried for adjacent track. North bank of stream

Gazetteer (*cont'd*)

Stainton Moor, The White Bog	SE090955, 300m	Large, high	In marsh, see survey plan of White Bog field system and cairnfield in Fleming 1998a, fig.8.3
ELLERTON ABBEY			
Above Stolleston Wood	SE058971, 315m	Large, high	East bank of stream
GRINTON			
Harker Mires	SE034974, 345m	Large, high	East bank of stream, 30m below spring rise, 150m south of ring cairn, cairnfield and field system
Grinton Lodge	SE04559760, 275m	Large, average	
Harkerside Place Springs	SE02669822, 276m	Medium, average	Very compact, circular
Whitebeck Marl Pit Spring	SE034987, 182m	Medium, average	On terrace above River Swale
Whitebeck Cottage 2 sites	SE032985, 205m	Medium, average	At spring rise, in pasture
Low Whita, 2 sites	SE002978, 275m	Medium, average	
Whitaside	SD991971, 380m	Medium, average	At spring rise, near ring cairn
MELBECKS			
Brownsey Stoops Rig	SD96649858, 425m	Large, medium	Found by Eileen Laurie at spring rise 150m north-east of Stoops Rig. The spring rises below steep slope of limestone outcrop. Peat and heather covered, part buried by hill wash at rear. Flint chert and quartzite artefacts found on limestone outcrop above mound, see Laurie this paper
REETH			
Reeth High Moor	NY991006, 390m	Small, low	
Reeth Low Moor, Cringley	NZ001003, 398m	Medium, average	At spring rise, below large circular enclosure, cairns nearby. Type site
Reeth Low Moor, Calver, 2 sites	NZ014001, 430m	Medium, average Medium, average	At spring rise, circular enclosure on Riddings Rig
Reeth Low Moor East	NZ016005, 378m	Large, average	At spring rise
NEW FOREST			
Holgate, West House	NZ06500468, 390m	Medium, average	Turf covered, at spring
DOWNHOLME			
Downholme Springs	SE119980, 285m	Medium, average	At spring controlled for water supply. Type site
MARSKE			
Cordilleras Farm	NZ09490408	Large, high	Turf covered, at spring in wet pasture north of small arms range
Buzzard Scar, double site (2 sites adjacent)	NZ~~069007~~, 295m	Medium, average	Complex site on open heath above Marske Beck, wide views towards Holgate How
MARRICK			
Stelling	NZ069007, 295m	Medium, average	300m NE of unenclosed settlement
TEESDALE			
WASHTON			On the army range
Sturdy Springs, 3 sites	NZ135052, 258m (centre)		Three sites on same spring stream, the two uppermost are close together on the west bank of the spring, the
Site 1, middle site	NZ13510519	Large, high	lower site is 100m downstream, the lower site is
Site 2, upper site	NZ13500516	Large, average	100m downstream, in front of the grenade range.
Site 3, lower site	NZ13480527	Large, average	Found by Paul Brown. Centre site very large 15m*, 12m and <2m high
GAYLES	NZ119062, 308m	Medium, average	Fire fractured stone revealed by erosion at confluence of two small streams, otherwise entirely turf covered. Rock art sites nearby (Beckensall and Laurie 1998)
BARNINGHAM	NZ057078, 390m	Medium, average	Located below stone-walled settlement on terrace below How Tallon
	NZ056083, 355m	Double site 15m* 8m overall	Field boundary and rock art sites nearby. All sites on Barningham Moor now scheduled following survey by Tom Gledhill and Ros Nichol
HOPE	NZ015072, 520m	Medium, average	Highest of all burnt mounds located so far. On north side of Tees–Swale watershed
SCARGILL	NZ023098, 395m (centre) 3 sites	Medium, average	On same spring stream. Settlement at Stang Foot, cup-marked rocks at NZ027098 and NZ001108 (centre)
Sealey Spring	NZ008109, 340m	Medium, average	At spring rise

Gazetteer (*cont'd*)

COTHERSTONE			
West Loups Spring	NY96681722, 350m	Medium, average	South-west of West Loups farm. At spring rise. Cup and ring sites nearby. Beckensall and Laurie 1998, 71–3
HUNDERTHWAITE			
How Gill	NY952205, 360m (centre) 4 sites	Small, low, one Medium, average, two	All sites at How Gill are at springs to the north of a moraine ridge on which several rock art sites are located
LANGLEYDALE AND SHOTTO	NZ04502398, 325m	Medium, average	On west bank of stream 300m below Coldwell Spring. Flat cist burial with short necked beaker, cairnfield and field system 300m to north-east (Brown 1998)
EGGLESTON			
Blackton Beck	NZ003254, 390m	Medium, average	Mesolithic and Neolithic flints found above Blackton Smelt Mill (Trechman 1912)
MIDDLETON IN TEESDALE			
Stotley Grange, Knott Well	NY971266, 400m (centre) 3 sites	Large, high Large, low Medium, low	The sites at Stotley Grange overlook the destroyed cairn circle at Eggleston (Hutchinson 1823)
HOLWICK			
Strands Gill	NY902267, 358m	Medium, high (centre) 2 sites Medium, low	Both sites at Strands Gill are on the west bank of Black Mea Sike. Site 1 has been partially excavated (Coggins 1986, 119, figs.15–16) as a round cairn. Finds included a broken, polished Group VI axe and flints. Site 2 is low and turf covered
Black Mea Crag Sike Old Sheepfold	NY896267, 370m Complex site	25m *9m overall	Very large triple site with prominent bowl depressions (troughs)
Eel Beck Bield	NY89542629, 395m	Medium, average	On north bank of Eel Beck. Iron bloomery site 100m to the south of the Beck, small cairns in the same area
Blea Beck Sheepfold	NY87332734, 413m	Large, average	This burnt mound is within a late shieling site (Coggins and Fairless 1997). Two hut circles may be prehistoric. Found by Tom Gledhill
FOREST AND FRITH			
Below Cronkley Scar	NY84262968, 380m	Large, high	Close to the Tees, but not on the river bank itself. This site is large and located on the bank of an abandoned spring stream. This site is a penannular bank of fire-cracked stone with a flat circular interior. One ortho-stat indicates a structure within the penannular bank
Fell Dike Sike	NY865281, 355m	Medium, average	320m south-east of Bracken Rigg Middle Bronze Age settlement (Coggins and Fairless 1984)