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Belton, 6000–5800 BC (SUERC-5339) from Eweford East and 7600–7525 BC (SUERC-7519) from Overhailes. This cumulative evidence, derived from seven different places along the A1 during excavations, evaluations and topsoil

strip monitoring, shows that people were active in the region at this time.

Within this random sample of Mesolithic activity, there are two notable and distinct concentrations: one on

2.1

Tools and the stone to make them

The main raw material used to make the struck stone tools from the A1 sites is flint. Flint is a silicious mineral, formed within chalk, which is very suitable for artefact manufacture because of its hardness, its predictable fracture pattern and its ability to provide a sharp and resilient edge. Chalk, originally much more extensive, is now restricted in Britain to parts of eastern and southern England, but the flint which it contained resists erosion well and it often survives as pebbles and cobbles in river gravels, beaches and glacial tills. Scotland, which has no remaining chalk cover, does have some flint available, mostly in the form of small pebbles found in secondary deposits of this type.

These secondary flint sources were exploited during prehistory; this was certainly the case at Eweford, where most of the artefacts were made from small, rounded pebbles. In fact, in the Mesolithic period people relied almost entirely on such locally available raw materials. Although some local flint was used in later periods, during the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age many flint artefacts were imported into Scotland from flint-rich areas further south. For example, virtually all the flint axeheads found in Scotland have been imported, since the locally available flint was not normally adequate in size or quality for the manufacture of such pieces. With smaller flint implements it is often more difficult to be certain of their origin, but it seems highly likely that the scrapers and serrated-edge flakes from Overhailes and the arrowheads from Eweford are all imported pieces.

The other common raw material used at Eweford is chert, a silicious mineral with similar properties to flint, but distinguishable by its more matt appearance. Chert forms in a variety of ways; it can develop organically in limestone deposits or inorganically in volcanic and other contexts. Chert is quite a common material in southern Scotland, occurring both *in situ* in seams and dykes and as pebbles in secondary deposits. The chert used at Eweford seems to have come from pebbles, and these were almost certainly found locally in East Lothian.

Prehistoric people would have collected pebbles of other workable raw materials wherever they found them, and this explains the occasional pieces of baked mudstone, agate and chalcedony at the A1 sites. Some use was also made of quartz, a raw material which is readily available but not so suitable for flaking. Definitely non-local are the single pieces of worked pitchstone found at Eweford and Pencraig Hill, since this only occurs in workable form on the island of Arran and would have had to be imported. Pitchstone is a type of volcanic glass that fractures in the same way as flint and chert, but which was perhaps appreciated more for its exotic quality, being a desirable rarity in East Lothian.

It appears that, for the most part at the A1 sites, stone tools made from non-local materials were brought in as finished implements, or at least the blanks for implements, rather than the raw material itself. We could envisage settlers from East Lothian travelling south to England or west to Arran to acquire artefacts, or their receiving artefacts that had been handed on across exchange networks that operated across Britain. The latter scenario is perhaps the more probable.

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