

St Govan's Head

Mesolithic Long Blades

Mesolithic flint Long Blades in Wales are dated approximately from 10,000 to 5,500 years ago (8,000 to 3,500 BC) during a period when the total population of mainland Britain probably did not exceed 5000, living a hunter-gatherer subsistence. Most likely, the blades date from circa 6,000 BC, when local settlement areas start to be defined, such as at Nab Head, near St Brides, Pembrokeshire.

During this period post-glacial sea level was rising, encroaching on land that now forms the bed of the Irish Sea. Present-day sea levels were stabilised by circa 7,200 BC.

Site and General Location:

Flakes 1 to 3 were found within a 10-metre circle, on weathered ground that has suffered gunfire and cattle treading.

The Map Ref for the finds site is SR 9729 9299

To locate the site within an aerial view, draw a line from the centre of the large white circular target at SR 9720 9304 and the mid-point of the sunken target tramway at SR 9735 9296, and the find site is half-way along that line. (For easy reference, the outer circle of the target is 100 yards diameter)

Geological Natural:

The underlying material is compacted end-glacial mud (eroded rock material) and clays with gravel, usually of a darker brown and more solidified appearance. This represents the likely Mesolithic surface.

The overlying material consists of <30cm accumulated blown sands, usually of a lighter appearance when dry, or darker after rain. This is more likely to be post-Mesolithic.

Above that is <20cm more recent organic soil.

The boundary between the end-glacial muds and the later blown sand is just definable, but there has been noticeable bioturbation and subsequent inter-mixing between the two.

Locally, plant material is largely removed by weathering and / or target gunfire over a large basin area approximately 150 mtrs long (SW-NE) by 75 mtrs wide.

Weathering has produced localised gravel wash-out, where the overlying blown sands have been removed, but heavier muds, gravel, and artefacts remain, not showing evidence of having been moved very far. (Max possible down-slope travel = 50 mtrs)

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Flake 1: Found Sunday 19th July, 2009 SR 97293 92998 60x18x8 mm

Weathering has left a substantive vertical section, nearly 1mtr high, with the (presumed) mud-sand Mesolithic boundary about 2/3 of the way up. (See Geological Natural above)

The flake was found in-situ at a steeply angled attitude within the end-glacial muds, (ie below the Mesolithic natural horizon) suggesting use as a spear-point that was driven in and lost.

The flake was photographed in-situ, then removed together with a sample of the immediately surrounding natural host material.

A typical Mesolithic long blade flake, with finely-worked upper surface, and singular concave lower surface, struck from a core. The edges are still sharp but the point shows usage / impact damage.

Flake 2: Found Friday 27th July. 2012 SR 97299 92998 44x16x8 mm

Found in loose gravel out-wash debris, approximately 3 mtrs down-stream (East) from Flake 1.

A shorter cutting tool, with one sharp edge, and the other edge showing either wear marks or possibly having been worked to a saw-edge with micro-pecks.

Flake 3: (Part) Found Tuesday 13th June, 2017 SR 97292 92994 38x15x8 mm

Found in loose gravel out-wash debris, approximately 8 mtrs up-stream (South) from Flake 1.

A typical Mesolithic long blade flake, with worked upper surface, and singular concave lower surface, struck from a core. This is a remnant of a flake that has broken in half.

Found By:

Ms Jan Heiland	janheiland@madasafish.com
7 Tan-y-Foel	
Gallt-Y-Foel	Mob: 07855 145 754
Caernarfon	
LL55 3EF	

Completed 1st year of a Degree course: "The History & Archaeology of Wales & Europe" at Bangor University, 1989.

Subsequently changed to a course in Geology & Earth Sciences with the Open University 2000 – on.

Flake Site



