

The choice of agate for the manufacture of these Bute implements poses interesting questions. Although flint is of rare occurrence on Bute, even on the strandline, chert is present in situ at Dunagoil Bay, a short distance from the scree, and also in the beach shingle nearby, also on the shoreline south of Kilchattan Bay on the east side of the Island. This apparent preference for agate in localities where plentiful alternative raw-material is available is not restricted to Bute, for it has been observed by the writer at a similar scree-site at Glenmuirshaw, Ayrshire and elsewhere at sites where radiolarian chert and other minerals are available in good measure. It is possible that the absence of brittleness and the excellent wearing properties possessed by agate make it pre-eminently suited for certain implement applications and it is not unreasonable to assume that these facts were known on an empirical basis in prehistoric times.

As the site, high and exposed, is a chipping floor it may be logical to assume that the workers took the best of the implements away with them.

At the time of writing, the area covered by vegetation at the head of the scree has not been excavated and may repay investigation.

FINDS

by J. G. Scott

Seventy-nine specimens from the St. Blane's site have been examined. I am grateful to Mr W. F. Cormack for his help in assessing the material, and to Mrs S. Gell for drawing representative examples.

With one possible exception, of flint, all the specimens are of the agate or quartz described by Mr H. McFadzean above. These materials are highly intractable, so that to have attempted the careful secondary working possible with flint must have proved fruitless. Consequently, the amount of waste is large – fifty-seven out of the seventy-nine pieces, whilst few of the worked specimens are readily comparable with the standard scrapers and other implements, known in flint. Mr Cormack is prepared to accept two specimens, nos. B51 and B67, as microliths of the Mesolithic period. All the others are not sufficiently diagnostic to be classified as other than prehistoric, though this is not to deny that some of them might also have been Mesolithic.

Microliths

B51. Part of a backed blade, 9 x 5mm, broken (Fig. 1).

B67. Backed blade, patinated, possibly of flint, 17 x 9mm (Fig. 1).

Borers

B9. 26 x 14mm, with slight retouch to improve point (Fig. 2).

B75. 33 x 13 mm, with little if any retouch; polished tip shows use (Fig. 1).

Scrapers

B12. Side scraper, 3.2 x 2 cm, with fine retouch along working edge.

B13. End scraper, 4.6 x 4.5 cm, with slight but extensive retouch (Fig. 2) (Fig. 13).

B14. End scraper, 4.5 x 3.2cm, with slight retouch but evident polish of working area (Fig. 2)

B15. Side scraper, 4.9 x 3.2 cm, with slight retouch to back (Fig. 2).

B16. End scraper, 4.7 x 3.6cm, slightly hollow edge with retouch.

- B17 End scraper, 4.4 x 2.3cm, the working edge slightly retouched.
 B18 Side scraper, 3.8 x 2.4cm, the working edge retouched and polished (Fig. 1).
 B29 Side scraper, 3.6 x 2cm, the working edge retouched and polished (Fig. 1).
 B76 Side scraper, 2.8 x 1.7cm, the working edge slightly retouched and polished.
 B83 End scraper, 1.9 x 1cm, the working edge retouched (Fig. 1).

Blades

- B6 Backed blade, 20 x 12mm, retouched at broader end perhaps for use as a scraper (Fig. 2).
 B10 Backed blade, 3.5 x 1.5cm, retouched at one end, perhaps for use as a scraper (Fig. 2).
 B37 Backed blade, 18 x 9mm, the working edge with fine retouch.
 B50 Blade, 18 x 8mm, the broad end finely retouched (Fig. 1).

Flake

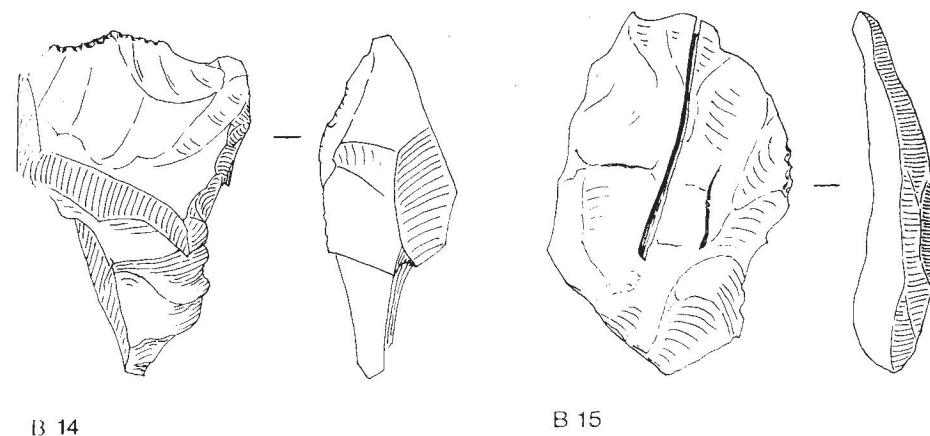
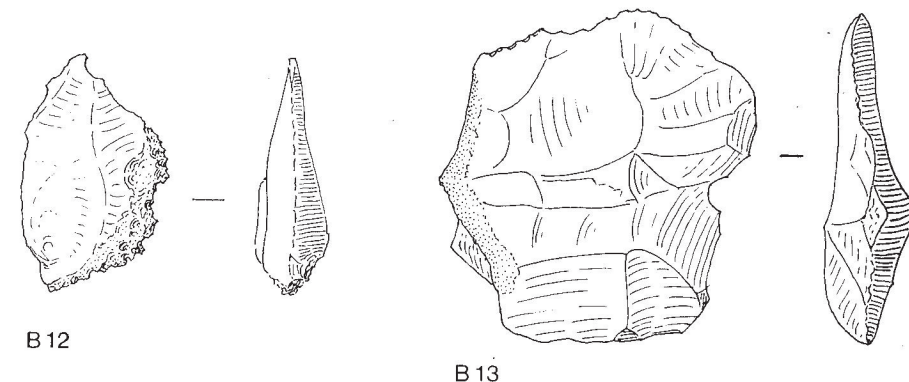
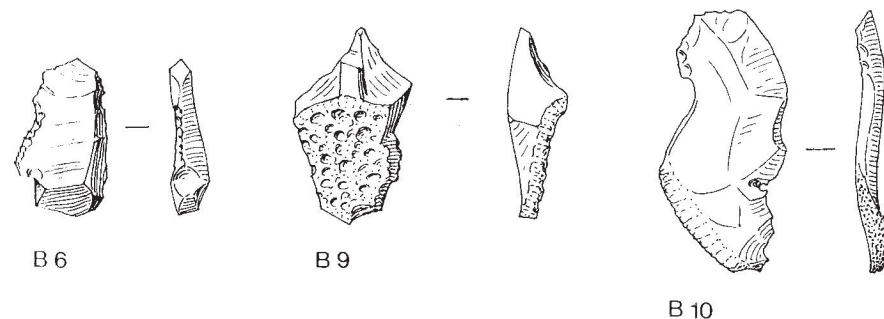
- B58 17 x 18mm, with 9mm of fine retouch along one edge.

Spalls

- B43 2.4 x 1.9cm, with slight retouch to straight working edge.
 B55 1.8 x 1.5cm, with slight retouch along two edges.
 B62 1.6 x 1.3cm, with slight retouch along better edges.

Glencallum Bay: NS 112524.

B48 Flat round flint scraper, 2.5 x 2.4cm, made from a beach pebble flake with much of the cortex remaining on one face; the working edge shows fairly steep retouch. Probably Neolithic; found by Mrs McFadzean on 10 August, 1973 on raised beach W of Glencallum Bay (Fig 1).

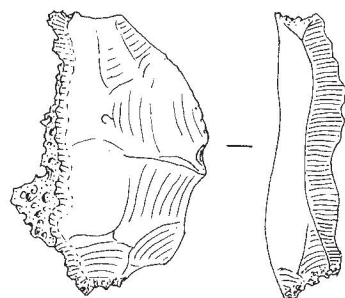


AGATES 1:1

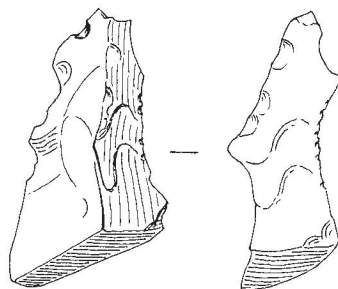


SOME RESEARCHES SELECTED FROM THE PERIOD 1557-1731 INTO EARLY SCHOOLING IN BUTE

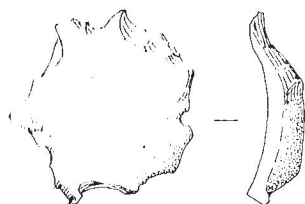
K. Clegg, J. Sandeman.



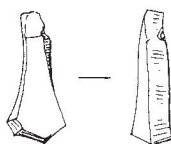
B 18



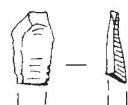
B 29



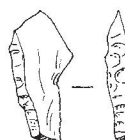
B 48 GLENCALLUM



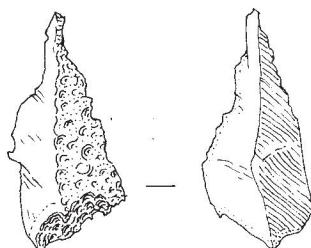
B 50



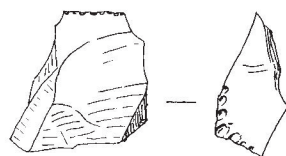
B 51



B 67



B 75



B 83

AGATES 1:1



Inspired by Mr A. M. Orr's book on 'Schools of Bute' and intrigued by the stories our grandparents told of barefooted children walking long distances to school, we decided to find out more about the early days of schooling in Bute. Surely few children can have crossed to school by rowing boat as did the children from Inchmarnock.

Early records of education on Bute are scarce and fragmentary. Local records were removed by Cromwell's men. 1. "On the 16th December 1660, 85 hogshead of papers and original records were lost on board ship."

There had been an act of Parliament in 1494 which stated that "Barons and freeholders of substance were to send their eldest sons to school at aught or nyne years of age." 2. This may have been the first act in Europe to set up any form of compulsory education.

In 1560 John Knox and fellow informers produced the First Book of Discipline. The section on education outlined plans for elementary schools in every Parish, and Grammar Schools in towns of any repute. 2.

Nevertheless the first definite evidence we have found of schools in Bute is of a Grammar School in Rothesay between 1557-1634, 3, and a thatched school in Castle Street in 1680 4.

This latter school was badly built and frequent references were made to the disastrous state of the roof. Consequently classes were held for many years in the Bishop's Palace prior to the making of a proper road up to Castle Street. William McCartney, schoolmaster pled constantly "to make the schoolhouse convenient and decent, as well as warmer, than it was with an earthen floor" but the town Council only agreed to plaster the roof. 5.

For many years after William McCartney's death the authorities had difficulty in appointing a suitable teacher and they eventually decided to build a new school. The old school was "selt for £67." 6.

The records are confusing because of the frequency of the name Stuart or Stewart. The schoolmasters, scholmasters, schollmasters or schuilmaisters of those names included Robert, James, Dugald and Patrick or Patrik. The latter seems to have given intermittent service and may have been that Rev. Patrik Stuart who was "deposed by the Presbytery on May 25, 1657 for swearing at his mother-in-law" 6.

In the country areas in the late 1600's there were itinerant teachers for whom rooms were made available in certain farms. The fees paid