

# Excavations at Black Hill and Castle Qua: Lithic Assemblage Report

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## Introduction

There is a small lithic assemblage of four pieces submitted for analysis from excavations Black Hill and Castle Qua. Information on the recovery locations are taken from the data structure report (Murtagh 2017).

The methodology, type and attribute terminologies employed for the analysis of lithics follows the format devised and adopted for the *Southern Hebrides Mesolithic Project* (Finlayson *et al.* 1996, 2000). References to specific artefacts will cite the catalogue number followed by the small finds number.

## Black Hill: Assemblage Character and Composition

### Raw Material

The assemblage comprises two chert and one jasper lithics (Table 1) fashioned from small pebble resources. The hard smooth cortex suggests the raw materials originated from riverine deposits.

There was also a small unworked jasper pebble (003/507) submitted with the worked lithics. This indicated the probable availability of this raw material pebble resource.

Raw Material	Type	Number
Chert	Core	1
Chert	Flake	1
Jasper	Blade	1
Total		3

Table 1: Composition of assemblage.

### Condition of assemblage

All three pieces are fresh.

### Primary Technology

#### *Chert platform core 001/501*

The core was recovered from (511) abutting the inner edge of the rampart (502) in Trench 5. Other finds from (511) included a lump of cannel coal (SF 505), two hammerstone fragments (SF 502 and 503), and a chert flake (see below).

The original small pebble was sub-rounded. There is a dominant simple platform with a minimum of two removals, and two subsidiary platforms each with one removal. The second stage involved a crossed simple platform, and the third stage is represented by an opposed cortical platform. Flakes are the predominant removal, and probably abandoned because of the loss of the angle (less than 90°) required for further removals.

#### ***Chert flake 002/504.***

The irregular, tertiary flake was recovered from (511). It was struck from a simple platform with proximal spalling, and has a feathered distal termination. The scars on the dorsal surface suggests it is from a multi-directional core.

#### ***Jasper blade 004/508***

The irregular, tertiary blade was recovered from the fill (523) of a palisade slot [522] cutting the inner rampart (502). The blade is irregular, struck from a simple platform of a multi-directional core. There is proximal spalling and a feathered distal termination.

## **Castle Qua**

There was an irregular, tertiary flint flake fragment (005/006) recovered from the top soil. The colour and character does not suggests importation of flint from much further afield. It may derive from fluvio-glacial deposits.

The proximal end is missing. Distal spalling indicates a reduction strategy with anvil support of the core. The dorsal scarring determines that the flake came from a core with opposed platforms. There is edge damage indicating trampling or processes of natural modification (cf. McBrearty *et al.* 1998).

## **Discussion**

None of the lithics are truly diagnostic and cannot be ascribed to any given prehistoric archaeological epoch. The lithics are likely to be residual from prehistoric activity and introduced into Iron Age contexts due to unknown taphonomic events.

## References

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