

**Channel Tunnel Rail Link
CTRL UK Limited
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**The worked flint from Little Stock Farm, Mersham,
Kent (ARC LSF99)**

by Rebecca Devaney

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1 INTRODUCTION

A total of 118 pieces of struck flint were recovered from the excavations at Little Stock Farm (Table 1). A further 15 fragments (136 g) of burnt unworked flint were retrieved from 12 contexts (Table 2). There is little chronologically distinctive material and the flint is broadly dated to the late Neolithic and Bronze Age on typological and technological grounds. The majority of the flint was recovered from Iron Age and Medieval contexts and is therefore redeposited. The only *in situ* flint deposits are material associated with middle Neolithic ceramics. These will be looked at separately from the rest of the assemblage.

Table 1. Summary of worked flint by feature.

	Middle Neolithic features		Remaining assemblage	Total
	Posthole 2507	Pit 2214		
Flake	6		73	79
Blade-like flake	2		1	3
Blade			1	1
Chip	1		5	6
Rejuvenation flake			1	1
Irregular waste		1	4	5
Multi-platform flake core			2	2
Single platform flake core			1	1
Core on a flake			1	1
End and side scraper			3	3
End scraper		1		1
Side scraper			1	1
Thumbnail scraper			2	2
Other scraper			1	1
Petit tranchet arrowhead	1			1
Piercer			2	2
Retouched flake			4	4
Retouched blade			2	2
Serrated flake			1	1
Miscellaneous retouch			1	1
Total	10	2	106	118

2 PROVENANCE

The worked flint was thinly spread between 55 contexts, including pits, postholes, ditches, gullies and layers. Excluding the unstratified, which produced 22 pieces, only two contexts contained more than five pieces of flint. Context 2506, the single fill of a posthole, contained ten pieces of flint and context 2508, the layer that seals this posthole, contained seven pieces of flint.

3 RAW MATERIAL AND CONDITION

The most frequently occurring raw material in the assemblage is gravel flint (41%). It is likely that the nodules were locally found in river gravel deposits. A small amount (4%) of Bullhead

flint is present. This is found in the Bullhead Bed at the base of the Reading Beds (Dewey & Bromehead 1915:18-19) and is identified by a green cortex with an underlying orange coloured band. The nearest source of Bullhead flint is on the north Kent coast and is therefore a non-local material. There is no evidence for the use of chalk flint.

Over half of the material (55%) was recorded as being slightly damaged and 27% as moderately damaged. This implies post-depositional disturbance, which is consistent with the suggestion that most of the material is redeposited. Surface alteration is minimal, with just 15% of the assemblage, from 14 contexts, showing signs of cortication. A total of 41% suffer breaks and 3% show signs of burning.

4 TECHNOLOGY AND DATING

4.1 Features associated with middle Neolithic pottery

Posthole 2507 and pit 2214 have been dated to the middle Neolithic on the basis of the ceramics. In terms of the flint, the single fill (2506) of posthole 2507 contained nine pieces of debitage and one *petit-tranchet* arrowhead and the single fill (2213) of pit 2214 contained one end scraper and one piece of irregular waste (Table 1).

Two of the flakes are blade-like, however one could be an unintentional blade removal because it shows the negative scars of a previous flake removal. Attribute analysis was conducted on the material, but most of the results are inconclusive and the sample size is too small to make any generalisations. However, the presence of platform edge abrasion and soft hammer struck pieces supports the proposed middle Neolithic date.

The end scraper is fairly large with chunky, direct retouch. It is likely to be Neolithic, possibly earlier rather than later (Illustration AH-530). The *petit-tranchet* arrowhead is of Green's class B (Green 1980:101, fig. 37), which is a fairly rare type. They are most commonly associated with Grooved Ware in later Neolithic contexts, however, examples are known from across the Neolithic and Bronze Age. A direct comparison can be made with the CTRL site at Pilgrim's Way, where a *petit-tranchet* arrowhead (along with five or so unretouched pieces) is associated with Peterborough Ware in a pit (Reference to be supplied by Kate Cramp on completion of the report).

4.2 The remaining material

The rest of the flint assemblage from Little Stock Farm was recovered from Iron Age, Medieval, undated and unstratified contexts. It is suggested that the majority of this material is redeposited. The total of 106 pieces of flint can be broken down into 80% debitage, 4% cores and 16% tools (Table 1).

There are 85 pieces of debitage. Flakes dominate this total, although there is a small proportion of blades and blade-like flakes (3%). The latter are from the Iron Age contexts and are almost certainly residual from an earlier phase. The dominance of flakes suggests a later Neolithic to Bronze Age date for this material (Ford 1987:73). The assemblage also includes five chips, four pieces of irregular waste and one rejuvenation flake. This may reflect the presence of knapping activities close by.

Attribute analysis was performed on all the material. The results support the suggested later Neolithic to Bronze Age date. Most pieces are of an indeterminate hammer mode, however hard and soft hammer struck pieces are present suggesting a mixed hammer mode. Termination and butt types vary with feather terminations and plain butts being the most common. Platform edge abrasion was noted on 17% of the assemblage, suggesting a sometimes careful knapping strategy. This usually occurs in earlier periods, but was used to a lesser degree in later industries. Nearly half of the removals are non-cortical flakes compared to slightly fewer trimming flakes. A total of 78% of the material has less than 25% cortex remaining, which suggests the use of well worked cores. As expected from a flake dominated assemblage, the vast majority of previous removals are flakes.

Of the four cores, there are two multi-platform flake cores, one single platform flake core and one core on a flake. They are small in size, weighing from 14 g to 34 g. The cores are irregularly worked with no evidence of platform edge abrasion, which supports a later Neolithic and Bronze Age date. The core on a flake is made from Bullhead flint. It has at least three removals and an area of possible scraper retouch, perhaps indicating that it was originally a scraper before later use as a core.

Scrapers dominate the tools category with seven pieces of various types. This includes two thumbnail scrapers, which are usually found in early Bronze Age assemblages. Both pieces have abrupt direct retouch on most edges (Illustrations AH-510 and AH-569). The remaining five scrapers have direct retouch to their distal ends, sides, or both (Illustration AH-513). The high number of scrapers may imply the presence of a specialised scraping activity. Retouched flakes and blades are also common. The four retouched flakes have direct retouch, inverse retouch or both, on one or more edges. Non-cortical blanks have been used for three of the scrapers and one is made on a side trimming flake of Bullhead flint. The two retouched blades have direct retouch on one edge. The serrated flake has retouch and serrations on the left edge (Illustration AH-608). It is broken but in good condition. The two piercers are fairly crude, one has two large removals on the dorsal surface that creates a point and the other has inverse retouch on the proximal left. There is also a thermal flake with miscellaneous retouch. It is roughly shaped like an equilateral triangle and has direct retouch on the long side (Illustration AH-610).

5 USEWEAR

Analysis was carried out on all the flint, except that from the unstratified contexts. The aim was to identify the key groups that would benefit from more detailed analysis in the future. Assessable material was scanned using low power microscopy (x20-x40 magnification) and the presence or absence of damage from utilisation was recorded. Out of the 99 pieces examined, just five were unassessable. Of the remaining number, 41% have usewear present.

6 DISCUSSION

The oldest flint recovered from Little Stock Farm was associated with middle Neolithic ceramics. These deposits are the only *in situ* features that contained flint. The association of a *petit-tranchet* arrowhead with middle Neolithic ceramics is interesting, especially when compared to the similar association at Pilgrim's Way. The majority of the flint was recovered from Iron Age and Medieval contexts and is therefore redeposited. It can be dated to the late Neolithic and Bronze Age on typological and technological grounds and may reflect low-density background activity.

*Table 2. Summary of burnt unworked flint by context
Mostly re-used assessment data (URL 2001:66, table 13) with some additions.*

Context	Count	Weight (g)
2009	1	4
2114	1	8
2125	1	30
2203	1	10
2301	2	8
2319	1	44
2347	1	4
2402	1	4
2504	2	10
2511	1	4
2622	1	2
2625	2	8
Total	15	136

7 CATALOGUE

Table 3. Catalogue of illustrated flint.

Fig.	Context	Category/description
AH-530	2214	End scraper. Proximal & distal left break, chunky direct retouch on distal end, fairly large.
AH-510	2001	Thumbnail scraper. Fairly abrupt direct retouch on left, right & distal edges, small break proximal left, minimal damage to distal end, good condition.
AH-569	2508	Thumbnail scraper. Abrupt direct retouch on all edges apart from the distal end, large example.
AH-513	2015	End and side scraper. Direct retouch on distal left, right & centre, platform edge abrasion, worn edges.
AH-608	0	Serrated flake. Blade, serrations proximal left, retouch medial & distal left, proximal break, some cortex, good condition.
AH-610	0	Miscellaneous retouch. Thermal fragment roughly shaped like an equilateral triangle, direct retouch on long side, minimal damage.

8 REFERENCES

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