ASSESSMENT OF THE WORKED FLINT

Tania Holmes

1. Introduction

1.1 A total of 68 struck flints were recovered during the archaeological excavations by CAT to the north of Westenhanger Castle, and during the watching brief carried out by the OAU. 21 artefacts were collected during the watching brief and the remainder were collected during the excavation. The Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS) undertook the evaluation of the area, but no struck flint from that phase of fieldwork has been seen by the author, and it is not considered here. It is briefly described in the evaluation report (URS 1998, Appendix 3) and it consists of seven pieces of struck flint, six of which are unstratified. It was noted in that report that 'there are no diagnostic types present among the unstratified material and the dating could run from Mesolithic through to Bronze Age but it is more likely to be Neolithic through to Bronze Age' (URS 1998, 22).

1.2 All of the artefacts were recovered by hand, during excavation. None have been retrieved from environmental samples.

1.3 It is anticipated that further analysis of the struck flint assemblage may assist in addressing the fieldwork event aims, specifically when determining the function and economic basis of the prehistoric activity on the site.

2. Methodology

2.1 The assemblage has been quantified and scanned but no detailed recording of the artefacts has taken place. Each individual artefact has been assigned to basic category, as indicated in Table 6.

3. Quantification

3.1 The assemblage composition is shown in Table 6. A broad range of artefacts are represented which suggest that there was no bias in the collection of material and it is likely therefore that the assemblage is fairly representative for the site as a whole. The overall total is relatively small, at just 68 struck flints, 47 of which were recovered by excavation. Several of the flints, however, came from Groups of Phases 1 and 2, which are of prehistoric date. Those from Groups 1 and 2, in particular, may well have been *in situ*.

4. Provenance

4.1 The provenance of the individual artefacts is shown in Table 7. An initial look at the material recovered during the excavation shows that the majority (70%) of the assemblage was recovered from phase 3 deposits and later. With the exception of one piece from a group 1 context and two pieces from group 3, a small yet significant group, forming 23% of the excavated assemblage, was recovered from group 2, the buried soil deposit seen in excavation.

4.2 Given that the assemblage from the buried soil has the potential to be *in situ*, it is considered likely that the struck flints have some value in addressing some of the research objectives.

4.3 The remaining 21 flints came from the watching brief. These were dispersed across a number of features, including the circular feature (Structure 2), which is of Iron Age date, the rectilinear enclosure (sub-group 450) of Iron Age date and associated Iron Age features. No struck flints from the OAU work appear to come from *in-situ* deposits, with the possible exception of those relating to the circular feature (Structure 2).

5. Comparative Material

5.1 There are no published references relating to discoveries of struck flint assemblages from the immediate vicinity of the Westenhanger site. In fact the nearest recorded assemblage is that recovered on the CTRL site to the north of Saltwood Tunnel.

5.2 Detailed assessment and analysis of the Saltwood assemblage is yet to take place, but initial scanning suggests a late Neolithic-Bronze Age date range, which may be broadly contemporary with the Westenhanger assemblage.

5.3 Previous discoveries of flintwork in the Saltwood area have been recorded (Willson 1985, 234) and a substantial bronze hoard was also found in the vicinity in 1872 during the excavations for the railway (O'Neill Osborne 1939, 202). Hence activity during this period, in the general locality, is well attested.

6. Potential for further work

6.1 The presence of the buried soil and the earlier features demonstrate prehistoric activity in the area, and the association of struck flint artefacts with these deposits provide good potential for addressing the Fieldwork Event Aims and the Landscape Zone Priorities.

6.2 In regional terms, this small assemblage is of some significance, given the paucity of previous discoveries in the area. This increases in status when considering the associated archaeological deposits. It is therefore recommended that the assemblage is reported on in full.

Table Six

Worked Flint Assemblage Composition

Artefact Type	*Number*	*Group %*	*Total %*	*Period*	*Comments*
Scrapers	1	12.5	1.5		
Piercers					
Burins					
Projectiles	2	25	3	Bronze Age	B & T A/heads
Denticulates	1	12.5	1.5		
Fabricators					
Microliths					
Core tools					
Other tools	3	37.5	4		
Misc. retouch	1	12.5	1.5		
Tools - sub total	*8*		*12*		
Flake cores & core frags	6	75	9		
Blade(let) cores & core frags	1	12.5	1.5		
Rejuvenation tablets					
Crested pieces					
Microburins					
Chips	1	12.5	1.5		
Production - sub total	*8*		*12*		
Blades & bladelets	10	20	15		
Flakes	41	80	60		
Blades & flakes - sub total	*51*		*75*		
Debitage	1	100	1.5		
Fragments - sub total	*1*		*1*		
Total	68				

Table Seven

Worked Flint Provenance

Site	Context	Sub-Group	Group	Phase	Count
Excavation	19	0	0	0	1
Excavation	186	35	1	1	1
Excavation	55	50	2	1	3
Excavation	79	15	2	1	1
Excavation	93	53	2	1	7
Excavation	175	46	3	2	2
Excavation	4	27	6	3	1
Excavation	6	32	6	3	2
Excavation	10	29	6	3	2
Excavation	63	59	6	3	3
Excavation	115	32	6	3	2
Excavation	173	32	6	3	1
Excavation	191	32	6	3	1
Excavation	8	45	7	3	2
Excavation	102	52	7	3	8
Excavation	182	45	7	3	2
Excavation	189	45	7	3	2
Excavation	84	20	8	3	1
Excavation	180	34	13	3	1
Excavation	52	49	15	4	1
Excavation	53	49	15	4	1
Excavation	89	49	15	4	1
Excavation	190	49	15	4	1
Watching Brief	55	500			1
Watching Brief	60	558			4
Watching Brief	71	450	21	2	1
Watching Brief	76	450	21	2	1
Watching Brief	80	506			1
Watching Brief	112	508	29	3	1
Watching Brief	113	511			2
Watching Brief	198	422	22	2	1
Watching Brief	204	214			1
Watching Brief	220	525			1
Watching Brief	321	448	33	4	1
Watching Brief	330	445			1
Watching Brief	345	444	28	3	1
Watching Brief	350	424			1
Watching Brief	369	425			1
Watching Brief	418	424			2

APPENDIX 5

ASSESSMENT OF THE BURNT FLINT

Tania Holmes

1. Introduction

1.1 A total of 178 fragments of burnt flint, weighing some 1.6kg, were recovered during the archaeological fieldwork to the north of Westenhanger Castle (this excludes any material which may have been collected by MoLAS during the evaluation. This is limited, however, to a single burnt flint). Only 3% of this assemblage was recovered during the excavation phase. The assemblage was hand recovered and no burnt flint has been retrieved from environmental samples, to date.

1.2 Whilst much of this assemblage may be residual, it is possible that it derives from the prehistoric activity noted at the site and therefore it does have some potential for addressing the Fieldwork Event Aims.

2. Methodology

2.1 The assemblage has been quantified and weighed, the results of which are shown in Table 8. No detailed recording has been carried out, but this is not thought to be necessary.

3. Quantification

3.1 In total 178 pieces of burnt flint were recovered. There is no observable bias in collection, hence it is likely that this assemblage is fairly representative for the site. The distribution of the burnt flint is shown in Table 8. This indicates that most of the assemblage came from the watching brief. The majority came, in fact, from a single context (context 164, sub-group 167, Group 19) in the south-eastern part of the site, close to deposits of Middle Bronze Age ceramics, with Structure 2 a little further to the east.

4. Provenance

4.1 The provenance of the individual fragments is shown in Table 8. With the exception of one group (noted above), the table shows that there are no apparent concentrations of burnt flint. All of the material recovered during the excavation was retrieved from medieval and later contexts. The material from the watching brief, in contrast, derives from at least one *in-situ* prehistoric deposit, although the remainder again came from medieval deposits.

5. Potential for further work

5.1 The discovery of prehistoric deposits on the site at Westenhanger may suggest that the burnt flint is a result of activity, of this date, in the area. It is difficult to suggest a date for this assemblage but burnt flint is commonly associated with Bronze Age activities although it is not impossible that the flint was incidentally burnt during the later activities. Further study of this assemblage, particularly in regards to distribution, may address the Fieldwork Event Aims and the Landscape Zone Aims.

5.2 It is recommended that this assemblage is considered alongside the struck flint assemblage and that it forms part of the main report.

Table Eight
Burnt Flint Distribution

	Context	*Sub-Group*	*Group*	*Phase*	*Number*	*Weight*
Watching Brief	113	511			3	4
Watching Brief	115	511			5	17
Watching Brief	164	167	19	1	161	1501
Watching Brief	228	440	32	4	1	1
Watching Brief	321	448	33	4	1	13
Watching Brief	330	445			1	11
Excavation	51	49	15	4	3	15
Excavation	127	21	11	3	1	20
Excavation	182	45	7	3	2	15