

## 1.1 Assessment of the Flint

*by Philippa Bradley*

### *Introduction*

- 1.1.1 A small assemblage of flint was recovered from excavations at Thurnham Roman Villa (ARC THM 98), Honeyhills Wood (ARC HHW 98), Hockers Lane (ARC 420/99 62+200-63+000), the watching brief at Thurnham Villa (ARC 420/99 63+400-63+900) and the watching brief from Thurnham Lane to West of Crismill Lane (ARC 420/99 63+900-66+350).
- 1.1.2 A total of 334 pieces of flint were hand retrieved at Thurnham Villa, and a further 730 pieces were recovered by sample sieving. In addition, 7 pieces of flint were hand-retrieved from Hockers Lane, with a further 120 small pieces from sample sieving (located at chainage 62+800).
- 1.1.3 The recovery and study of flint was undertaken in accordance with the Fieldwork Event Aims for the sites, which are set out in section 2 of the main report, above. The recovery of this material was undertaken to aid the establishment of a dated occupation sequence for all phases of activity identified. It was also designed to address wider Landscape Zone Priorities concerning the reconstruction of the palaeo-environment and the interaction with past communities, and spatial organisation of landscape and change through time with particular reference to later agriculturalists (2000-1000BC).

### *Methodology*

- 1.1.4 All material was rapidly scanned for diagnostic pieces. The sieved material contained no diagnostic pieces, and no further work has been carried out on it at this stage. The hand retrieved material was subject to rapid scanning and recording, with information regarding dating, technology and general condition being noted.

### *Quantification*

- 1.1.5 The overall quantification of the flint assemblages from the five sites is shown in Table 2.1, and broken down by site and context in Tables 2.2 to 2.6.
- 1.1.6 The 334 pieces of recorded hand retrieved flint from Thurnham Villa are summarised by context in Table 2.2.
- 1.1.7 The 730 pieces of sieved material from Thurnham Villa contained no diagnostic pieces, but there were a few flakes and chips and a high proportion of natural material.
- 1.1.8 The material from Hockers Lane contained no diagnostic pieces, but there were a few flakes and chips and a high proportion of natural material.
- 1.1.9 Overall, diagnostic artefacts were limited, but the technology of many the common retouched pieces (scrapers, knives, piercers and awls) would support a broad Neolithic-Bronze Age range. Some of the retouched pieces (such as a denticulated scraper from context 11594) may be of mid-later Bronze Age date, whilst some of the neater, more carefully worked pieces are likely to be of later Neolithic-early Bronze Age date.

### *Provenance*

- 1.1.10 The majority of the flint at all sites was either redeposited in later features, or from unstratified contexts. The flint from the excavations at Thurnham Villa showed a noticeable concentration of material from the west of the site but this may simply reflect excavation biases.
- 1.1.11 At Thurnham Villa, seven flakes were recovered from fill 10292 of the prehistoric waterhole 10288, although these are not closely datable. From fill 10294 of the same feature, there was a worn end scraper of Neolithic or Bronze Age date. This piece is likely to have been redeposited as the feature, a waterhole, is of middle Bronze Age date, and it is unlikely that the scraper would be contemporary.
- 1.1.12 Context 20132, a buried soil horizon, produced four flakes, but these are not closely datable. The material is probably also redeposited, since the soil horizon is dated to the Late Iron Age to AD 70+.
- 1.1.13 Context 20360 produced a small group of redeposited Neolithic or Bronze Age flintwork including scrapers, a piercer and a core. This context was a buried soil horizon beneath the villa construction levelling layers, and is dated to the Late Iron Age to around AD 50. Other Neolithic and Bronze Age material came from a range of secondary contexts, and the material is demonstrably residual. These contexts include: modern and topsoil layers (10397 and 10706), the late Roman corndrier (11049), the boundary ditch of the main villa building (11331), natural disturbance (11594), a medieval ditch (11794), layers and features associated with the aisled building (12099, 12361 and 12373), and a charcoal-rich late Roman layer in room 20000 of the main villa building (20058).
- 1.1.14 The material from the other fieldwork events is of similar character to that from the main Thurnham Villa excavations. However, a rod or edge blunted microlith of probable later Mesolithic date was recovered during the Thurnham Villa watching brief (located at chainage 63+500). It probably represents a chance loss as no other probable Mesolithic material was identified.

### *Conservation*

- 1.1.15 The flint is packed appropriately for long-term storage. Some of the burnt unworked flint is fragmenting but little can be done to prevent this. It is recommended that any natural material be discarded during the analysis phase. It should also be considered whether all of the burnt unworked material needs to be retained; any worked and subsequently burnt pieces will have been identified during the assessment, as all of this material will have been scanned. Therefore it may be appropriate to discard some of this material retaining a selection for the archive.

### *Condition*

- 1.1.16 The majority of the material was redeposited in later features or came from unstratified contexts. Therefore most of the flint has suffered some post-depositional damage; cortication is mostly light to medium, a couple of pieces are more heavily corticated. The burnt unworked flint recovered was very heavily calcined, and either grey, white or reddish tinged.

### *Comparative material*

- 1.1.17 The nature of the material suggests there will be little scope for comparative study, but the assemblage should be compared with the scatter recovered in this area during the 1994 Surface Collection Survey (URL 1995).

*Potential for further work*

CTRL Landscape Zone Priorities and Fieldwork Event Aims

- 1.1.18 The following section discusses potential for further work in the light of the Landscape Zone Priorities and Fieldwork Event Aims.
- 1.1.19 These assemblages have relatively low potential to address the Fieldwork Event Aims and CTRL Landscape Zone Priorities. Most of the material was redeposited or from unstratified contexts, and excavation biases will inevitably have skewed the retrieval of material.
- 1.1.20 The flint does not greatly aid the interpretation or dating of the sites. However, it does point to sporadic Mesolithic-Bronze Age activity in the area. Spatial study of the material, combined with the scatter recovered during field walking, may reveal activity areas. This contributes to the wider CTRL Landscape Zone Priorities concerning the activities of past human communities in the palaeo-environment, and the spatial organisation of the landscape in the context of later agriculturalists, 2000-1000 BC.
- 1.1.21 Given the provenance of the majority of the material little other further work is likely to be useful.

*Bibliography*

URL 1995 1994 Surface Collection Survey report in 2 volumes by OAU for URL

*Table 2.1: Thurnham group sites: Quantification of flint*

<b>Site Ref</b>	<b>Flint - no of pieces</b>	<b>Boxes and bags</b>
ARC THM 98	318	7 boxes
ARC HHW 98	1	1 bag
ARC 420 99 64+800	2	1 bag
ARC 98 62+200	7 + 27 small bags from sieving	1 box
ARC 420 63+500 99	6	1 bag

Table 2.2: Thurnham Roman villa (ARC THM 98): Flint: Summary composition of assemblage by context

Context	Count	Period	Comments
U/S	3	NE; EBA?	1 knife, 2 miscellaneous retouched flakes, minimally retouched. Also 1 natural
10014	5	?	2 flakes, 3 burnt unworked flints
10044	1	?	1 burnt unworked flint
10046	1	?	1 flake, poss natural
10053	1	?	1 burnt unworked flint
10110	-	-	Natural
10112	1	?	1 burnt unworked flint
10196	2	?	2 burnt unworked flint
10197	2	?	2 burnt unworked flint
10198	1	?	Flake, heavily calcined
10242	1	?	Flake
10273	-	-	Natural
10292	7	?	Flakes, all hard hammer
10294	1	NE; BA	Worn end scraper
10307	1	?	Flake
10326	1	?	Flake
10343	2	?	1 flake and 1 face/edge rejuvenation flake
10349	1	?	1?flake, poss natural; also 3 natural
10395	1	?	1 burnt unworked flint
10397	1	BA?	Steeply retouched end and side scraper
10417	-	-	2 natural
10419	1	?	Flake
10424	2	?	1 flake, 1 burnt unworked flint
10461	-	-	Natural
10469	-	-	7 pieces of natural
10488	1	?	Flake
10499	-	-	Natural
10501	-	-	4 natural
10517	-	-	4 natural
10546	-	-	1 natural
10548	-	-	1 natural
10604	-	-	1 natural
10609	1	?	1 burnt unworked flint, 4 natural
10616	-	-	2 natural
10634	1	?	Flake
10641	-	-	Natural
10646	5	?	5 flakes, 1 natural
10647	-	-	3 natural
10654	6	?	Small chips, also 1 burnt bone and 4 natural
10659	1	?	Chip
10683	-	-	2 natural
10692	1	?	?flake, poss natural
10693	-	-	Natural
10706	4	NE; EBA	1 end and side scraper, 3 burnt unworked flint
10714	1	?	Burnt unworked flint
10727	9	?	1 flake, 8 burnt unworked flints
10729	-	-	Natural
10738	1	?	Burnt unworked flint
10743	2	?	2 burnt unworked flints
10744	3	?	3 burnt unworked flints
10749	1	?	1 burnt unworked flint
10754	1	?	Flake
10756	-	-	Natural
10810	-	-	Natural
10828	-	-	Natural
10832	-	-	3 natural
10859	1	?	Flake

Context	Count	Period	Comments
10865	-	-	Natural
10870	2	?	1 flake, 1 burnt unworked flint, 2 natural
10888	2	?	1 flake, 1 burnt unworked flint, 1 natural
10939	-	-	Natural
10951	1	?	Flake, poss plough struck, much damage
10975	2	?	Flakes
10994	1	?	Flake, also 2 natural
11033	1	?	burnt unworked flint, also 1 natural and 1 piece bone
11044	1	?	flake
11049	1	NE	point, possibly an unfinished leaf-shaped arrowhead or an awl
11078	-	-	2 natural
11094	1	?	flake
11235	1	?	flake, also 1 natural
11251	-	-	natural
11254	-	-	natural
11301	-	-	natural
11331	5	NE; EBA	4 flakes, 1 scraper – worn edges
11336	1	-	1 flake, also 2 natural
11343	-	-	natural
11345	-	-	natural
11346	1	-	burnt unworked flint, also 1 natural
11378	1	?	flake
11381	3	?	flakes
11387	1	?	flake, also 1 natural
11392	-	-	natural
11394	1	?	flake
11447	1	?	blade
11472	-	-	natural
11475	2	?	flakes, one may be plough struck
11479	1	?	flake
11493	-	-	2 natural
11506	1	?	burnt unworked flint
11510	1	?	flake
11520	3	?	1 flake – possibly natural, 2 burnt unworked flints
11569	-	-	natural
11578	3	?	burnt unworked flints, also 1 natural
11585	-	-	natural
11594	1	BA?	denticulated side scraper
11609	-	-	2 natural
11616	1	?	flake
11623	3	?	flakes
11634	-	-	natural
11642	-	-	natural
11645	-	-	2 natural
11682	1	?	flake
11693	-	-	natural
11713	1	?	flake
11776	-	-	3 natural
11794	1	NE?	scraper – side
11862	5	?	burnt unworked flints
11865	-	-	3 natural
11872	1	?	large burnt cobble
11890	1	?	burnt unworked flint
11929	-	-	natural
11938	-	-	natural
11961	1	?	flake, possibly natural
11107	1	?	flake
11127	1	?	burnt unworked, also 1 natural
11143	-	-	natural
11157	-	-	natural

<b>Context</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Comments</b>
11163	1	?	burnt unworked flint
12013	-	-	natural
12032	1	?	flake
12036	1	?	flake
12062	-	-	natural
12084	1	?	flake
12099	1	BA?	denticulated scraper, also 2 natural
12101	16	?	5 flakes, 11 burnt flints, also 2 natural
12109	5	?	2 flakes, 3 burnt unworked flints, 1 natural
12203	25	?	6 flakes, 19 burnt unworked flints, also 11 natural
12279	11	?	4 flakes, 7 burnt unworked flint, also 4 natural and 1 fossil
12289	1	?	Burnt unworked flint
12324	1	?	Flake, 1 natural
12347	1	?	Flake, 1 natural
12357	-	-	Natural
12361	5	BA	1 end scraper, 1 flake, 3 burnt, 4 natural
12363	3	?	1 flake, 2 burnt unworked flints, 3 natural
12369	1	?	Flake
12373	52	BA?	46 flakes including a few blades/blade-like flakes, 4 cores – mostly roughly worked multi-platform types, 1 end scraper, 1 rod
12378	-	-	Natural
12379	1	?	Blade-like flake
12380	1	?	Burnt unworked flint
12392	1	?	Blade-like flake
12434	-	-	Natural
124821	1	?	Burnt unworked flint
12540	-	-	Natural
15001	1	?	Burnt unworked flint
15073	1	?	Burnt unworked flint
15145	-	-	Natural
15212	1	?	Flake
15214	1	?	Flake
15221	3	?	2 flakes, 1 core on a flake, 3 natural
15243	-	-	Natural
15275	2	?	Burnt unworked, 1 natural
15279	-	-	Natural
15283	1	?	Burnt unworked flint, also 1 natural
15310	5	?	Burnt unworked flint, also 4 natural
15319	1	?	Flake
15328	1	?	Retouched flake, some later damage
15336	1	?	Burnt unworked flint
20002	1	?	Burnt unworked flint, also 2 natural
20043	-	-	Natural
20058	1	NE; BA	End and side scraper
20074	-	-	Natural
20076	13	?	Flakes, 4 natural
20082	1	?	Burnt unworked flint
20084	1	?	Burnt unworked flint
20087	-	-	Natural
20089	1	-	Burnt unworked flint
20095	-	-	Ironstone?
20098	-	-	Natural
20109	1	?	Flake
20112	1	?	Flake
20132	4	?	Flakes
20168	1	?	Chip
20169	-	-	Natural
20174	1	?	Burnt unworked flint, also 1 natural
20183	2	?	Flakes
20188	-	-	3 natural

<b>Context</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Comments</b>
20198		-	Natural
20200	1	?	Flake
20201	1	?	Burnt unworked flint
20202	-	-	2 natural
20344	1		Flake
20360	9	NE; EBA?	3 flakes, 3 scrapers, 1 piercer, 1 single platform flake core. Scrapers and piercer are neatly worked.



*Table 2.3: Thurnham Lane west of Crismill Lane ARC 420 99 64+800, Summary of flint assemblage*

<b>Context</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Comments</b>
8	1	?	flake, worn
34	1	?	Flake

*Table 2.4: Hockers Lane (ARC 420 99 62+200-63+000) Summary of flint assemblage from excavations*

<b>Context</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Comments</b>
76	-	-	2 natural
1	3	?	Flakes
29	-	-	Natural
46	1	?	Flake
70	-	-	2 natural
180	-	-	Natural
213	-	-	Natural
220	-	-	Natural
U/S	1	NE; BA?	Multi-platform core

*Table 2.5: Honeyhills Wood ARC 420 HHW98, Summary composition of flint assemblage by context*

<b>Context</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Comments</b>
3502	1	?	1 chip possibly natural, also 9 natural

*Table 2.6: Thurnham Roma Villa SDS ARC 420 63+500 99, Summary composition of flint assemblage by context*

<b>Context</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Comments</b>
U/S	4	?	3 flakes, 1 retouched flake, also 1 natural
310	2	ME	1 obliquely blunted point, a burnt unworked flint

