

EVALUATION (FIELDWALKING)
AT HUNTSMAN'S QUARRY
KEMERTON

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Project 1064
Report 274
HWCM 15263 and 21698

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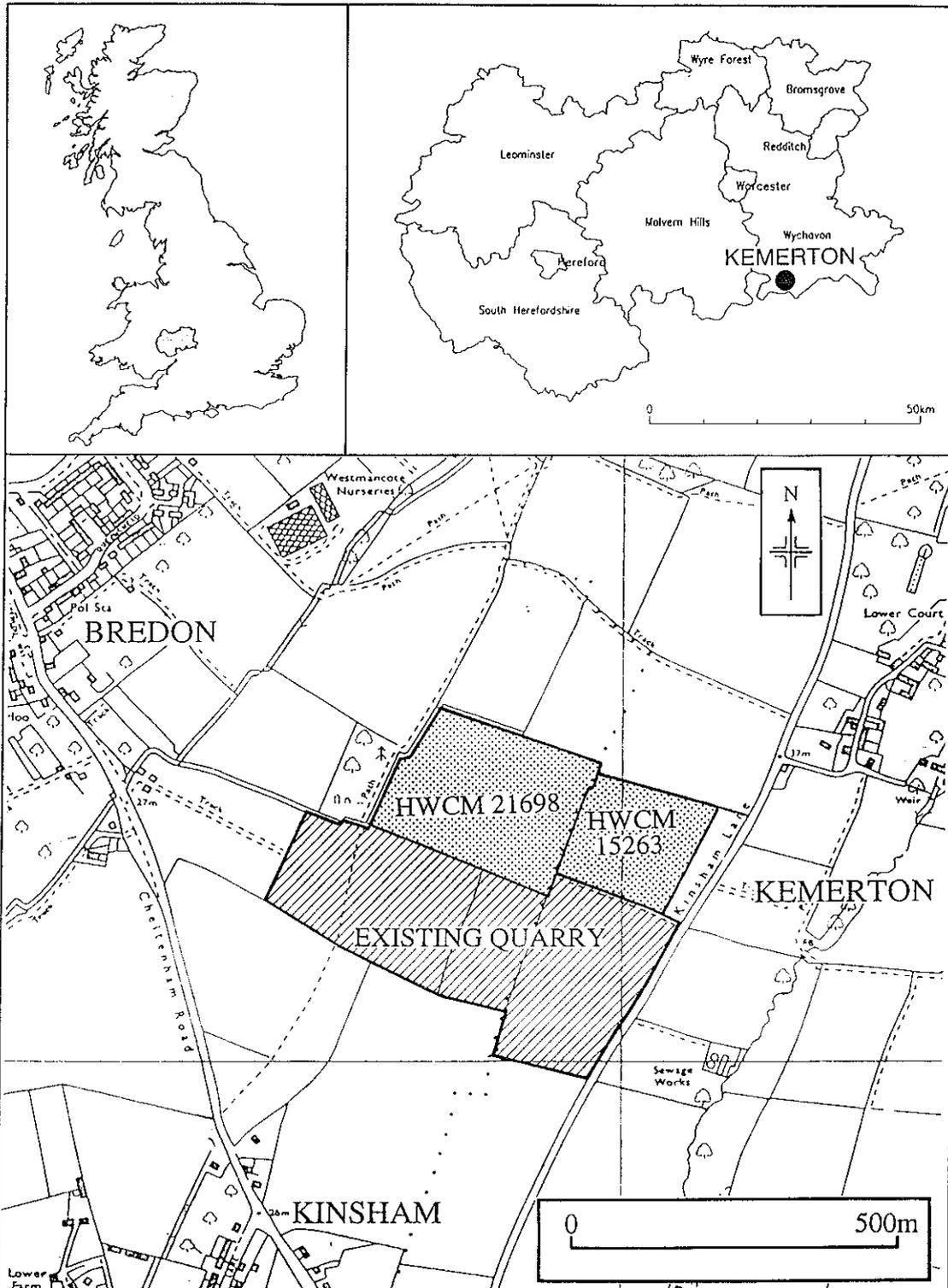


Figure 1: Location of site

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Evaluation (fieldwalking) at Huntsman's Quarry, Kemerton

Martin Cook and Derek Hurst

Part 1 Project summary

1 Reasons for the project

Geophysical survey and fieldwalking as part of an archaeological evaluation were undertaken in response to a planning application (407341 [A]) by Huntsman Quarries Ltd (the Client) for the extension northwards of an existing quarry. The site is located to the south-west of the village of Kemerton to the west of the Kemerton to Kinsham road (NGR SO 9400 3630; Fig 1). The fields are currently arable.

A cropmark of an enclosure has been recorded from aerial photographs (HWCM 15263) and there is an extensive band of other cropmarks in the surrounding area (HWCM 6051). One of these groups (HWCM 5098 and 5137) is a scheduled ancient monument (County Monument no Here and Worc 212). The cropmarks in this area comprise a complex and extensive series of sites dating from the Iron Age onwards. Evidence of previously unknown Saxon occupation in this area has recently been discovered to the south-east of the proposed extension to the quarry (Fagan *et al* 1994; HWCM 20019). An extensive range of deposits was recorded, although very few finds were recovered, dating from the 5th to the 8th century. These were interpreted as part of a rural settlement.

A geophysical survey undertaken by Stratascan on behalf of the Client suggested the presence of enclosure boundaries and possible bonfires or hearths in the vicinity of the cropmark (HWCM 15263). In the same general area the resistivity survey suggested the presence of a bank and ditch.

2 Outline of results and significance

The geophysical anomalies, particularly those of the magnetometer survey, suggest the presence of archaeological deposits in the vicinity of the cropmark (HWCM 15263). With the exception of two or three flint flakes the distribution of prehistoric artefacts is peripheral to these anomalies.

Examination of the quarry section immediately to the south of the proposed extension to the quarry shows that the natural gravel, into which features of these periods are usually cut, lies at a considerable depth below the topsoil. The survival of deposits dating to the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age is therefore likely to be good, reflecting the paucity of finds in the topsoil.

In the late Neolithic and early Bronze age, although impressive burial mounds and esoteric ceremonial structures are well known, settlement sites are uncommon. Such evidence as exists is usually confined to surface scatters of artefacts or pottery which are believed to have a domestic character.

The site may achieve national significance on the criteria of period, rarity, survival and vulnerability.

3

Conclusions

The scatter of late Neolithic and early Bronze Age flints may relate to the possible enclosures, a bank and ditch and possible bonfires or hearths, located by the geophysical survey and therefore represent what may well be a well-preserved site of these periods.

Part 2 Detailed report

4 Aims

The aims of the geophysical component of the evaluation were to scan the whole site with a rapid, extensive, low resolution technique to identify areas of archaeological potential including the location of a cropmark. This would allow a smaller area to be targeted for more intensive, high resolution techniques.

The aims of the fieldwalking component of the evaluation were to provide evidence of dating, the probable extent of any archaeological deposits present and to support the results of the geophysical survey previously undertaken. It is envisaged that the results of these two elements of the evaluation will enable sample trenches to be located in such a manner as to enable the character, survival and condition of any deposits to be evaluated as part of an agreed programme of works as part of the brief.

5 Archaeological background

This project was undertaken in response to a planning application (407341 [A]) by Huntsman's Quarries Ltd (the Client) for the extension northwards of an existing quarry. The site is located to the south-west of the village of Kemerton to the west of the Kemerton to Kinsham road (NGR SO 9400 3630; Fig 1). The fields are currently arable land.

The solid geology consists of sands and gravels (2nd terrace of the River Avon) (1:50,000, sheet 216 Tewkesbury, British Geological Survey). The soils are of the Evesham Association (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983, 1:250,000, sheet 3).

The site lies to the south-west of the village of Kemerton. Cropmarks of enclosures have been recorded from aerial photographs and there is an extensive band of other cropmarks in the surrounding area (HWCM 6051). One of these groups (HWCM 5098 and 5137) is a scheduled ancient monument (County Monument no Here and Worc 212). These cropmarks comprise a complex and extensive series of sites dating from the Iron Age onwards. Evidence of previously unknown Saxon occupation in this area has recently been excavated to the south-east of the proposed extension to the quarry (Fagan *et al* 1994; HWCM 20019). An extensive range of deposits was recorded, although very few finds were recovered, dating from the 5th to the 8th century. These were interpreted as part of a rural settlement. A possible cropmark has been identified within one of the fields identified for the extension to the quarry (HWCM 15263).

A geophysical survey undertaken by Stratascan (1994) on behalf of the Client suggested the presence of enclosure boundaries and possible bonfires or hearths in the vicinity of the cropmark (HWCM 15263). In the same general area the resistivity survey suggested the presence of a bank and ditch.

6 **Methods**

6.1 **Fieldwork**

6.1.1 **Fieldwalking strategy**

Fieldwalking was undertaken on two days between the 28th and the 29th September 1994. It was based upon transects at 20m intervals and stints of 20m over an area of approximately 8ha (Fig 2). Recording followed standard practice (County Archaeological Service Recording System 1993, as amended).

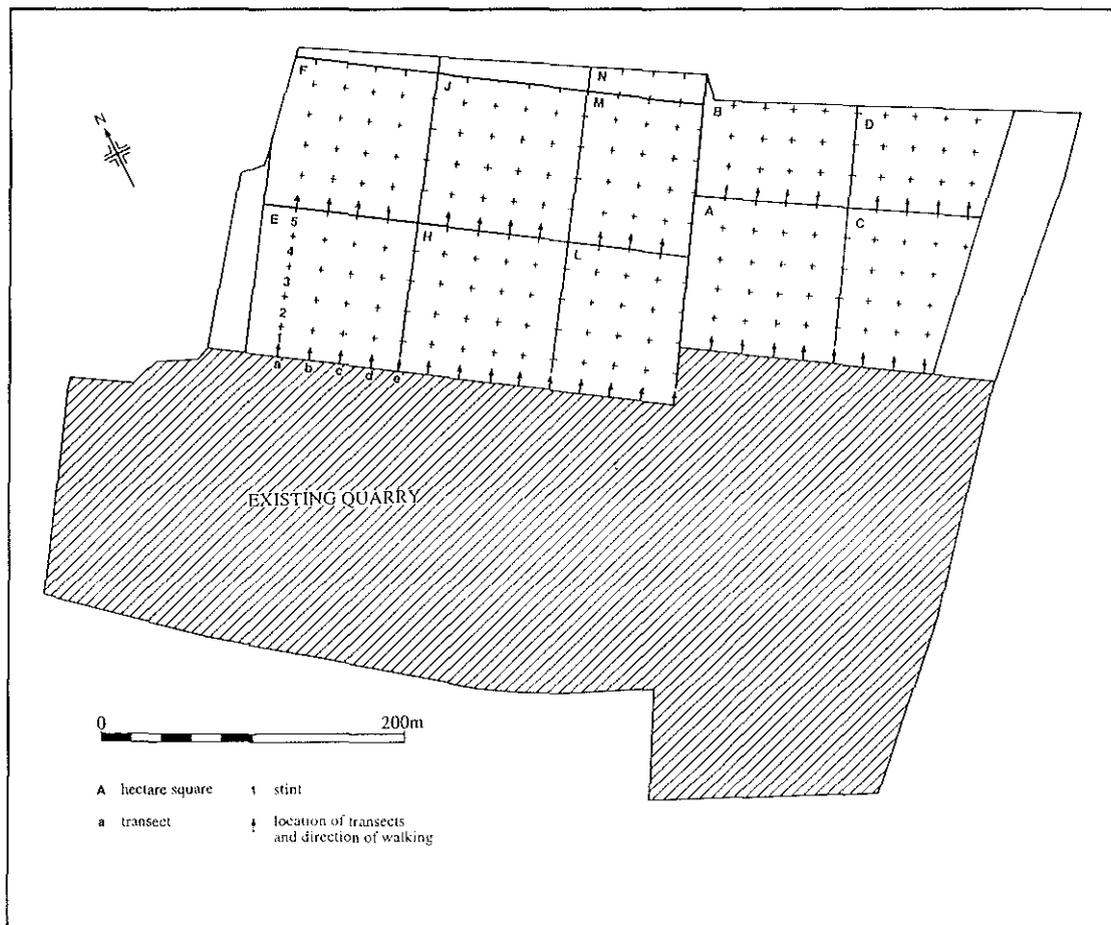


Figure 2: Layout of the fieldwalking transects

6.1.2 **Artefact recovery policy**

The artefact recovery policy was as defined in the County Archaeological Service recording system (1993 as amended). This in principle determines that all finds, of whatever date, must be collected with the exception of certain classes of material such as modern brick.

6.2 Post-fieldwork

6.2.1 Method of analysis

All hand-retrieved finds were examined. A preliminary record was made of all finds using the Context Finds Record sheets (AS8).

The artefactual assessment is focussed on a limited range of artefacts (flint, and medieval and earlier pottery). The following assessment is offered with the proviso that fieldwalked finds have usually been extensively damaged and so identification and dating of finds, in particular pottery, is frequently imprecise.

Artefacts were identified, quantified and dated to period. Where possible, a *terminus post quem* date was produced for each artefact. This data was used for determining the broad date of phases defined in the fieldwalking.

Pottery fabrics are referenced to a fabric reference series maintained by the County Archaeological Service (Hurst and Rees 1992, 200-9)

7 Analysis

7.1 The fieldwalking survey

7.1.1 Natural deposits

Occasional small scatters of natural subsoil were noted on the surface of the ploughsoil. These may be due to fluctuations in the natural level of the gravel, bringing the subsoil within reach of the plough or to the augering carried out as part of the geophysical survey.

7.1.2 Phase 1: prehistoric artefacts; Fig 3

These were represented entirely by flint, a stone which was used extensively during the prehistoric period for the manufacture of tools and weapons. The total number of flint artefacts recovered was 30. These may be divided into four groups: flakes, pieces of flint from which flakes have been struck, tools and fragments of burnt flint.

Flakes were the most common artefact recovered comprising 19 individual items. Flakes are a by-product of tool or weapon manufacture and may themselves be made into such products.

Only one piece of flint from which flakes had been casually struck was recovered as were six pieces of burnt flint.

Four tools were recovered. These were of a form known as scrapers and are believed to have been used for a variety of tasks including the preparation of skins and the carving of wood and bone. The examples from Kemerton were small, about 10 to 15mm across, and are known commonly as thumb-nail scrapers. These are usually dated to the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age periods (Dalwood C pers comm).

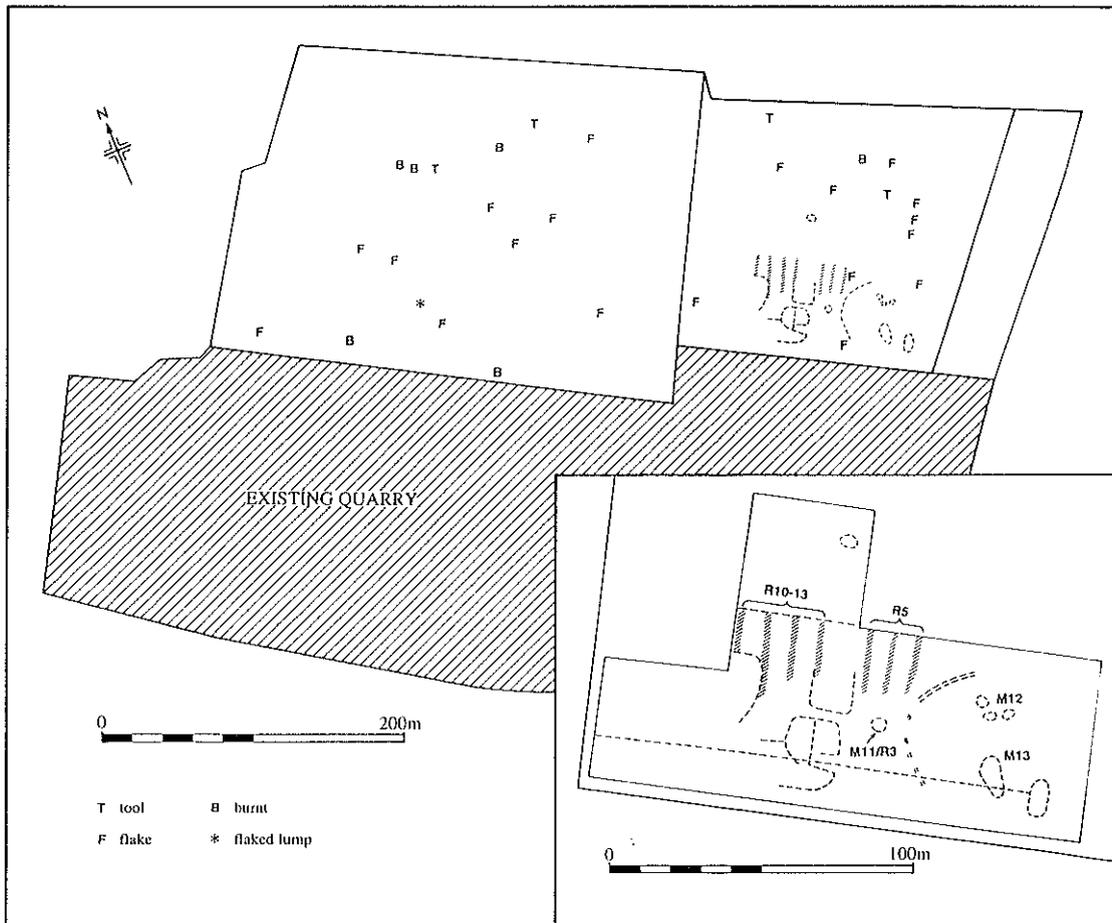


Figure 3: Distribution of prehistoric artefacts

7.1.3 **Phase 2: Roman pottery; Fig 4**

A small quantity of Roman pottery was recovered in a thin scatter. This was almost all Severn Valley ware (fabric 12), a local type that typically predominates in collections of Roman pottery in the area (Timby 1990, 243). It was datable to the mid 1st to 4th century AD. Most of this pottery was very abraded, and only survived as very small sherds. An exception was a sherd from the east of HWCM 15263 (hectare A, transect a, stint 5), which exhibited a fresh break and unabraded surfaces. Adjacent to this and to the west, the scatter of Roman pottery was slightly denser to the north-east of HWCM 21698 (hectare M).

7.1.4 **Phase 3: Late Saxon to early medieval pottery; Fig 5**

This period was represented by a single sherd of Cotswolds ware (fabric 57) of the mid 11th to 12th century. This type of pottery has not been widely found on rural sites in Worcestershire during fieldwalking.

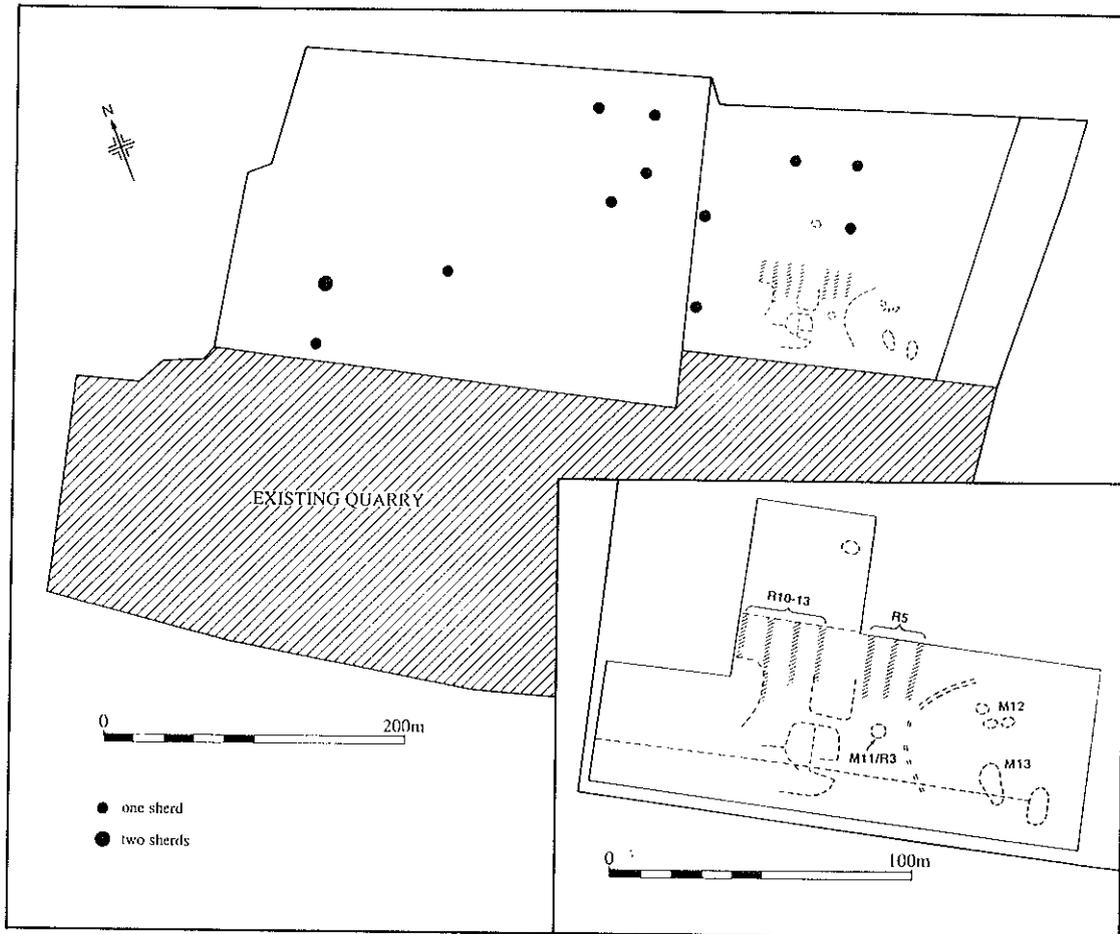


Figure 4: Distribution of Roman pottery

7.1.5 Phase 4: medieval pottery; Fig 5

Medieval pottery was a more numerous find than Roman pottery, and the average size of sherds seemed larger, though it was also in an abraded state. Its distribution revealed no major concentrations, though the small amount of earlier medieval pottery perhaps showed a slight bias towards the south-west of HWCM 15263 and the south-east of HWCM 21698 (hectares A and L).

A variety of fabrics was represented, including Malvernian (fabric 56). The high percentage of glazed to unglazed ware and the general shortage of cooking pottery suggested that much of this material is likely to be of later rather than earlier medieval date (ie mid 14th to 16th century).

7.1.6 Phase 5: post-medieval pottery

The highest proportion of the pottery was of post-medieval date, and the mid 17th to 18th centuries were particularly well represented. Post-medieval redwares (fabric 78) were most in evidence, and forms included tygs and pancheons.

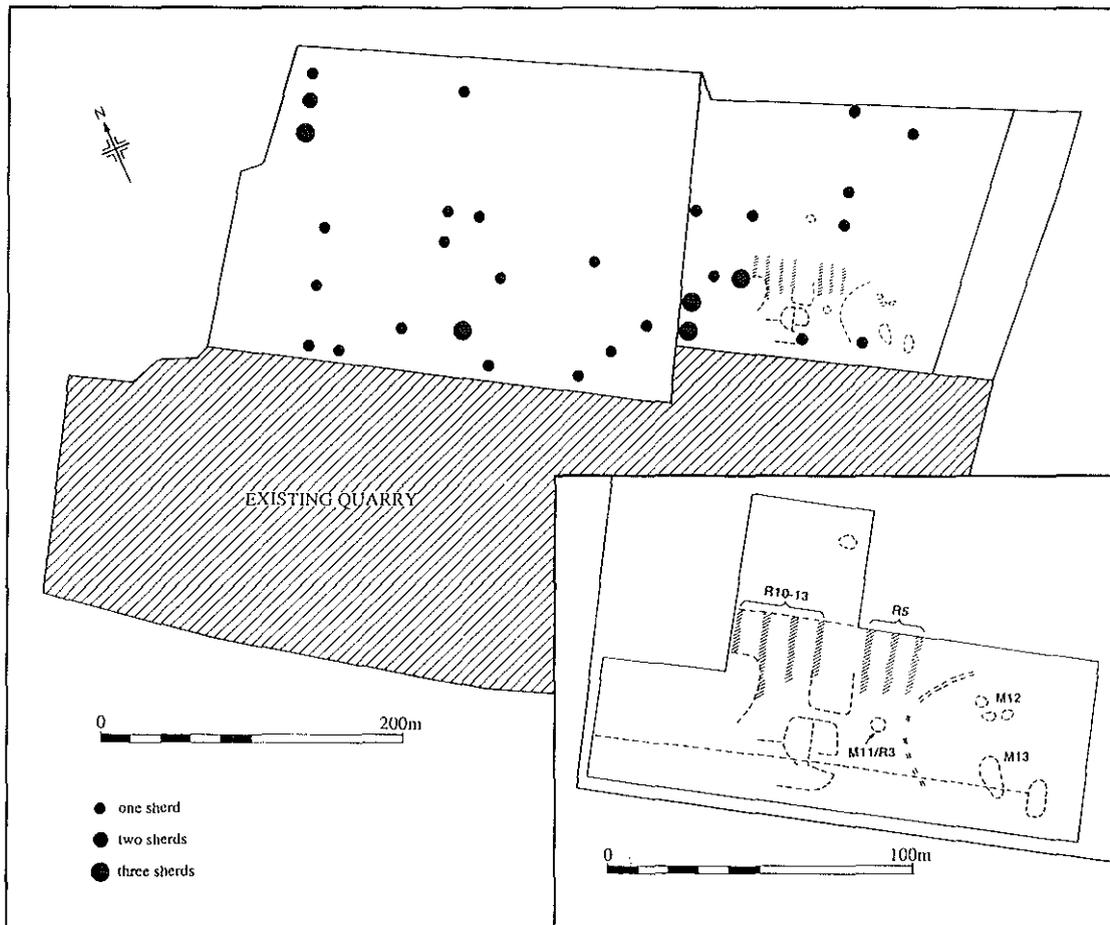


Figure 5: Distribution of medieval pottery

8 **Discussion**

8.1 **The fieldwalking survey**

To understand the meaning of fieldwalking distributions it is necessary to understand the behaviour responsible for generating it (Schofield 1991). Ethnographic sources suggest that discard tends to happen more frequently away from habitation areas (Bowden *et al* 1991).

8.1.1 **The prehistoric artefacts; Fig 2**

The flint assemblage, although small, is not insignificant. Important settlement sites elsewhere in the country have often produced little in the way of artefactual evidence (Bradley *et al* 1980). In the case of Kemerton the depth of the topsoil (Fig 6) may be protecting archaeological deposits from the plough and thus few finds have been brought to the surface. The fieldwalking produced scrapers dating to the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age and burnt flint. Scrapers may be used as an index of domestic activity (Bradley 1984)



Figure 6: Section in gravel quarry to south of HWCM 15263

and burnt flint usually has the same connotations. It is noteworthy that there were no finds of Iron Age date even though the possible enclosures, identified by the geophysical survey, are morphologically similar to examples of this date. It seems likely that the possible enclosures are central to an area of refuse disposal that took place during the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age and may reasonably be associated with these periods.

8.1.2 **The pottery; Figs 3 and 4**

Both the Roman and medieval distributions of sherds seemed to be general scatters without any substantial areas of concentration. Statistical analysis suggests that these assemblages compare well with the level of medieval pottery found during fieldwalking at one site in the parish of Hanley Castle, where the pottery was interpreted as resulting from agricultural activity in close proximity to a medieval settlement (Hurst 1993, 13-14). It seems, therefore, to be compatible with a typical background level, which has been referred to elsewhere as 'background noise' (eg Clark and Schofield 1991, 93).

Occupation of early to middle Saxon date in Worcestershire has not previously

been revealed by fieldwalking, and so the negative evidence for this period may not be readily taken to indicate the absence of archaeological remains, especially in the light of the close proximity of a site dating to this period (HWCM 20019; Faganet *al* 1994, 16) just to the south-east of the area of fieldwork being discussed here. This site has provided rare evidence of settlement dating to the 5th to 8th century.

The occurrence of Cotswolds ware in this fieldwalked assemblage is of note, as this type of pottery has not often been found during fieldwalking in the region. Its survival here and in Hanley Castle (near Horton Manor; Hurst *in press*) shows that it survives in the ploughsoil, and so may be a good indicator of late Saxon, and early medieval activity. As there was only a single sherd of this pottery, there is little evidence that it marks the site of settlement of this date, and so, as for other periods, it seems most likely that this ceramic indicates agricultural activity, such as manuring, which was common practice in the past (Postles 1979).

The artefact scatters described above are therefore unlikely to be of significance for the location of occupation within the area of fieldwalking. The scatters may well, however, represent evidence for arable cultivation in the Roman and medieval periods, and so settlements of these dates may be expected in the vicinity, in the latter case this being the present village of Kemerton which existed in the medieval period.

8.2 Concluding remarks

In summary, the distribution of prehistoric artefacts, dating to the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age appears to be complementary to the location of the cropmark and the anomalies identified by the geophysical survey. The Roman pottery was distributed very thinly, generally to the north of HWCM 15263 and 21698. The early and late medieval pottery produced no recognisable distributions although there were isolated concentrations. Due to these factors it is not considered that the Roman and medieval pottery will contribute significantly to the understanding of any surviving archaeological deposits and consequently they need not be considered further.

9 Significance

In considering significance, the Secretary of State's criteria for the scheduling of ancient monuments (DoE 1990, annex 4), have been used as a guide.

These nationally accepted criteria are used for assessing the importance of an ancient monument and considering whether scheduling is appropriate. They form an appropriate framework for the assessment of any archaeological site. The criteria should not, however, be regarded as definitive; rather they are indicators which contribute to a wider judgment based on the individual circumstances of a case.

One of the most distinctive features of the earlier Neolithic is the paradox that in a period defined by its subsistence economy the most common field monuments, burial mounds, relate to the dead (Bradley 1984). In the middle Neolithic, settlements, both open and enclosed, become the predominant form of monument.

Period

In the late Neolithic and early Bronze Age esoteric ceremonial structures are well known from certain parts of the country. Settlement sites of this period are known but are uncommon. In a recent summary of work in Cranborne Chase, Barrett *et al* (1991) identified only two settlement sites dating to the later Neolithic and four dating to the early Bronze Age.

Rarity

Evidence of settlement sites dating to the later Neolithic or early Bronze Age is usually confined to surface scatters of artefacts or pottery which are believed to have a domestic character. A recently excavated example is that at Firtree Field, Down Farm, Dorset (Barrett *et al* 1991). This comprised a series of pits and stakeholes which, on the basis of the associated finds, is considered to be domestic although it was not possible to positively identify the remains of any buildings. To summarise little is known about lowland domestic sites of this period from anywhere in the country.

Documentary

There is, of course, no contemporary documentary evidence for these sites. No other documentary evidence is known. This report, therefore, represents the only known documentary record of the site at this period.

Survival

Examination of the quarry section immediately to the south of the proposed extension shows that the natural gravel lies at a considerable depth below the ground surface (Fig 6). The paucity of artefacts on the surface may suggest that the plough does not commonly reach to the depth at which archaeological deposits of this period such as pits, remains of domestic or industrial activity, buried soils or land surfaces, might be expected to lie. The survival of deposits dating to the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age is therefore likely to be good and possibly so deep that they have been masked from the fieldwalking and the geophysical survey.

Vulnerability

It has been observed (Bradley *et al* 1980) that little or nothing of prehistoric sites may survive stripping for gravel extraction which often removes the loose surface of the gravel together with the topsoil. It is anticipated that the site may be severely damaged by initial stripping and will subsequently be destroyed by the proposed extension to the quarry.

To summarise, the site may achieve national significance on the criteria of period, rarity, survival and vulnerability.

10

Academic summary

Geophysical survey and fieldwalking as part of an archaeological evaluation was undertaken in response to a planning application by Huntsmans Quarries Ltd for an extension to the existing quarry. The site is located to the south-west of Kemerton to the west of the Kemerton to Kinsham road (NGR SO 9400 3630). The geophysical survey located possible enclosures, a bank and ditch and possible bonfires or hearths. The fieldwalking identified a scatter of late Neolithic or early Bronze Age flints, peripheral to the possible enclosures.

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, the Service intend to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The Client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

11 **The archive**

The archive consists of:

- 2 Fieldwork progress records AS2
- 2 Photographic records AS3
- 1 Colour transparency film
- 1 Black and white photographic film
- 1 Assessment of artefactual evidence
- 168 Context finds sheets AS8
- 1 Scale drawing
- 2 Boxes of finds
- 1 Computer disc

The project archive has been placed at:

Hereford and Worcester County Museum
Hartlebury Castle
Hartlebury
Near Kidderminster
Worcestershire DY11 7XZ

Tel Hartlebury (0299) 250416

12 **Acknowledgements**

The Service would like to thank Mr Joseph of Wardell Armstrong for his kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project.

13 **Personnel**

The Project was coordinated and the report edited by Simon Woodiwiss BA AIFA (Principal Field Archaeologist). It was lead by Martin Cook (Assistant Archaeological Field Officer). The assessment of artefactual evidence was prepared by Derek Hurst MA (Cantab) Dip Archaeol (Post Excavation), AIFA and Hal Dalwood BA MIFA (Project Officer). Illustrations were prepared by Caroline Hunt MAAIS, PIFA (Illustrator). Assistance on site was provided by Robin Jackson, Luke Fagan, Caroline Hunt, Suzanne Hartley and Helena Keely. Assistance with finds processing was provided by Stephanie Ratkie and Ian Watkins.

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15 **Abbreviations and glossary**

HWCM - Numbers prefixed with "HWCM" are the primary reference numbers used by the Hereford and Worcester County Sites and Monuments Record.

HWCC - Hereford and Worcester County Council.

DoE - Department of the Environment

Table 1 Summary of artefactual analysis

Phase 1 prehistoric artefacts

Hectare	Transect	Stint	Material	Quantity	Comments
A	a	2	Flint	1	Flake
B	c	2	Flint	1	Broken flake
B	c	3	Flint	1	Round scraper
B	e	1	Flint	1	Flake
C	a	1	Flint	1	Flake
C	c	5	Flint	2	Flakes
D	a	2	Flint	1	Burnt
D	unknown		Flint	1	Flake
D	b	1	Flint	1	Scraper
D	b	2	Flint	1	Flake
D	c	1	Flint	1	Flake
E	a	1	Flint	1	Flake
E	d	1	Flint	1	Burnt
E	d	4	Flint	1	Flake
E	e	4	Flint	1	Possible flake
F	e	2	Flint	2	Burnt
H	a	3	Flint	1	Flaked lump
H	d	1	Flint	1	Burnt
H	d	5	Flint	1	Flake
J	a	2	Flint	1	Round scraper
J	c	1	Flint	1	Flake
J	c	3	Flint	1	Burnt
J	d	4	Flint	1	Scraper
J	e	1	Flint	1	Flake

Phase 1 prehistoric artefacts continued

Hectare	Transect	Stint	Material	Quantity	Comments
L	b	3	Flint	1	Flake
M	a	4	Flint	1	Flake

Phase 2 Roman artefacts

Hectare	Transect	Stint	Material	Quantity	Comments
A	a	5	Pottery	1	Romano-British, not abraded
A	a	2	Pottery	1	Severn Valley ware, jar
B	d	2	Pottery	1	Romano-British, shelly ware, abraded
C	a	5	Pottery	1	Severn Valley ware, base, abraded
D	a	2	Pottery	1	
E	a	1	Pottery	1	
E	a	3	Pottery	1	
E	c	1	Pottery	1	
E	c	3	Pottery	2	
F	c	5	Pottery	1	Tentative, grooved body sherd, slightly sandy
H	b	4	Pottery	1	
L	b	4	Pottery	1	
M	a	4	Pottery	1	
M	b	2	Pottery	1	Severn Valley jar rim, abraded
M	b	5	Pottery	1	
M	c	3	Pottery	1	
M	c	5	Pottery	1	

Phase 3 and 4 medieval artefacts

Hectare	Transect	Stint	Material	Quantity	Comments
A	a	1	Pottery	3	
A	a	2	Pottery	2	
A	a	5	Pottery	1	
A	b	3	Pottery	1	May be a cooking pot
A	c	3	Pottery	1	13th to 14th century, cooking pot rim, not very abraded
A	c	5	Pottery	1	
A	d	1	Pottery	1	
C	a	5	Pottery	1	
C	b	1	Pottery	1	
D	a	1	Pottery	1	
D	a	4	Pottery	1	
D	c	3	Pottery	1	Jug handle
D	c	2	Pottery	2	Includes rim
E	c	1	Pottery	1	Fine micaceous fabric
E	c	3	Pottery	1	
E	c	5	Pottery	1	
E	d	1	Pottery	1	
F	b	3	Pottery	3	
F	b	4	Pottery	2	
F	b	5	Pottery	1	
F	c	4	Pottery	1	
H	a	2	Pottery	1	
H	b	5	Pottery	1	
H	c	2	Pottery	3	
H	d	1	Pottery	1	
H	d	4	Pottery	1	Odd rim shape
J	b	1	Pottery	1	

Phase 3 medieval artefacts continued

Hectare	Transect	Stint	Material	Quantity	Comments
J	b	5	Pottery	1	
J	c	1	Pottery	1	
J	d	3	Pottery	1	
L	b	1	Pottery	1	
L	b	5	Pottery	1	
L	c	2	Pottery	1	Fine fabric
L	d	3	Pottery	1	