

A Rotary Quern from Worksop, Nottinghamshire (RLW03)

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Excavations by Pre-Construct Archaeology Lincolnshire on a prehistoric crop mark site at Rayworth Lane, Worksop, Nottinghamshire (Site Code RLW03) produced a fragment of a rotary quern. The deposit in which the quern was found is provisionally dated to the 2nd century AD and this is consistent with the form and source of the quern.

Description

RWL03 (103) The fragment is part of the upper stone from a rotary quern. The upper surface and edge have been worked but no evidence of tooling survives, mainly because of the coarse texture of the rock. The lower surface shows considerable polish and the quern had clearly been used for some time before loss. The quern varies from 40 to 45mm in thickness and was between 400 and 450mm in diameter.

The quern is made from a coarse sandstone consisting of an illsorted quartz and feldspar sand with a moderate quantity of pores. The largest grains are up to 4mm across. Some of the quartz grains show signs of overgrowth. The source of the rock is the Lower Carboniferous Millstone Grit which outcrops in the Pennines and Peak District, to the west of Worksop.

Rotary querns of this sort were introduced to Britain during the early Roman period, replacing saddle querns, in which a rubber stone was moved backwards and forwards on the quern surface to grind the grain, and the beehive quern, which was a rotary quern in which the upper stone has a tall dome shape.

Assessment

The exploitation of Millstone Grit for the production of rotary querns began early in the Roman period, continued to the end of the Roman period and then began again at some stage in the Anglo-Saxon or medieval period. Production continued into recent times. Examples of querns from datable are required in order to determine if there are any trends in size or typology over this long period of production. This fragment should therefore be illustrated.

Costing

Illustration of quern stone: £25.00 plus VAT