Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit

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HOGOAK, BERKSHIRE

A Fieldwalking Assessment

1991

by A.E. Jones

For further information please contact:
Simon Buteux (Manager), Peter Leach or Iain Ferris (Assistant Directors)
Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
The University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT

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1.0: INTRODUCTION

This report decribes the results of an archaeological assessment of approximately 25 hectares of land at Hogoak, Warfield, Berkshire (centred on NGR. SU 889745: Figure 1A). In October 1991 Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) was commissioned by Shanks and McEwan (Southern) Limited to undertake a fieldwalking assessment in advance of a proposed landfill scheme.

This fieldwork was carried out at the request of Berkshire County Council, and follows an earlier assessment of the archaeological potential of this site, carried out by BUFAU (Jones 1990), which summarised the archaeological and historical background.

Fieldwalking was undertaken in optimum conditions, approximately two weeks after the site was disked and rolled, following germination (and prolonged heavy rain), but crop cover was negligible and did not impede visibility. The purpose of this second stage archaeological assessment was to test the archaeological potential of the proposed development area (Figure 1: Fields A and B). A priority was the investigation of Field A, identified during the earlier assessment as having the highest archaeological potential. The objectives here were to determine the significance of two possible soil marks (Figure 1B), and to examine and collect artifacts systematically from an area that had yielded a scatter of heat-shattered stone during a brief field inspection in July 1990.

2.0: METHODOLOGY

Fieldwalking as a method of archaeological assessment is based on the principle that archaeological deposits below the ploughsoil horizon may be located and characterised by collecting scattered artifacts that are lifted into the ploughsoil during ploughing. Although the material collected may also derive from dumping or manuring of agricultural land, and only a small proportion of the artifacts present in the ploughsoil may be visible at any one time, this technique may provide useful data at an early stage in site evaluation, to locate settlement foci, and to provide an approximate date for occupation.

The Ordnance Survey grid line Easting SU 890 was established using a Sokkisha SET 3 Total Station EDM (Figure 2). This served as a base-line from which Field A was sub-divided into 50m squares, using the Total Station, following the National Grid. In Field A each 50m square was subsequently sub-divided, using a tape, into four quarters (designated northwest, northeast, southwest and southeast). Each 25m square was walked for 10 minutes along transects aligned-south, and all artifacts visible in the ploughed surface were collected and bagged by square. A grid of 25m size was used to conform with the the collecting unit employed in other fieldwalking projects in Berkshire (e.g. Ford 1987). Artifacts from each 25m square were identified and quantified by type and date (Tables 1 and 2), and are reported on below (Section 3.0).

Field B appeared to have a lower archaeological potential, and here a different methodology of collection and recording was adopted. There were no indications of settlement remains visible on the aerial photographs, and a preliminary inspection of this field revealed only a few sparsely distributed artifacts, in contrast to Field A where relatively dense concentrations of artifacts were immediately apparent within the ploughed surface. In Field B the locations of individual find-spots were numbered, and plotted two-dimensionally using the Total Station, and all artifacts were collected and bagged individually.

3.0: THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS (Figure 3)

3.1: Field A

A total of 14 fragments of heat-shattered flint was recovered (Appendix: Table 1). The majority was located in the southern half of the field, but no more than one fragment was found per square. The ploughsoil contained a quantity of dark grey/ black flint and chert nodules, but struck flint and flint artifacts were absent.

Thirteen sherds of Roman pottery (See Appendix: Tables 1 and 2), were recovered from a total of eight squares, located mainly in the southeast of the field. The majority of the sherds was sandy grey wares (10 sherds), although Samian (1), and black burnished wares (2), were also represented. The material was sparsely distributed, no more than 3 sherds being recovered from a single square.

Only two sherds of medieval pottery were found. A total of 22 sherds of post-medieval pottery was recovered, mainly concentrated in the eastern sector of the field, with a smaller group being located in the southeastern corner.

The majority of the artifacts collected, amounting to 1200 pieces in total (over 95% of all artifacts), comprised post-medieval brick and tile, primarily flat peg tile, drain and gutter tile. Tile and brick were collected from the majority (73%) of the squares fieldwalked. By far the greatest density of this material derived from two discrete areas. One concentration was located just inside the eastern boundary of Field A, and measured approximately 75m by 50m. The second concentration was located just inside the northern edge of the field, and measured 100m by 50m, with the long axis aligned north-south.

3.2: Field B

In contrast to the dense concentrations of artifacts recovered from Field A, only 18 artifacts were recovered from the entire area of Field B. The largest concentration of artifacts comprised a scatter of post-medieval pottery and tile, close to the eastern access to Hogoak Lane, in the centre of the eastern side of the field. Two sherds of post-medieval tile were found in the northeast angle of the field. No prehistoric or Roman artifacts were recovered, and burnt flint was absent from this area.

4.0: DISCUSSION

4.1: Prehistoric

There was no direct evidence of prehistoric activity within the site, although the scatter of heat-shattered flint may derive from one or more hearths of unknown date, or from one or more burnt mounds, which may be of prehistoric date. These features are generally dated to the Bronze Age (2500-700 BC), and were formed by an accumulation of heat-shattered stone, surrounding a trough capable of holding water. The small quantity and widespread distribution of the burnt flint fragments recovered suggests that this material probably derives from a burnt mound or hearth located outside the bounds of the development area. This material could have been carried downslope from the plateau located beyond the southern site boundary, and into the site, by repeated ploughing or erosion.

4.2: Roman

Perhaps the earliest evidence of settlement within the development area itself is provided by the scatter of heavily-abraded Roman pottery, which cannot be dated more closely. It is possible that this pottery concentration, mostly derived from the southeastern angle of Field A, may define the approximate location here of a small rural settlement. This scatter is located between the 60m and 50m contours, on a northeast-facing slope, at the northern limit of a wide, naturally-formed plateau lying

mostly beyond the southern boundary of Field A. The natural topography of this area may suggest that the possible settlement could have been originally located on the higher plateau, to the south of the site, although, equally, the comparatively well-drained northeast-facing slope, (from which the pottery was collected) may have provided a favourable location for settlement on the poorly-drained underlying London Clay. If the settlement was located on the plateau to the south of Field A the pottery could have been carried downslope into the site by repeated ploughing or erosion, or by a combination of both factors.

The actual location of this possible farmstead remains to be tested by further fieldwork (See Section 5.2 below); and any further speculation as to its siting is not at present worthwhile. Despite the uncertainty concerning its location, the type of settlement represented here may be more confidently predicted. Recent fieldwork at Park Farm, Binfield, uncovered a Roman farmstead, located on London Clay, comprising a number of circular huts within the settlement, surrounded by a ditched field system, and may provide a model for the Roman farmstead possibly located at Hogoak (P. Chadwick, pers. comm.).

4.3: Medieval and Post-Medieval

The limited quantity of medieval pottery recovered from Field A (2 sherds) suggests that this material was imported during manuring; it does not suggest occupation here. The distribution of post-medieval brick and tile within Field A, and in particular the location of the two major concentrations of this material are more informative. The concentration located inside the eastern boundary of Field A correlates approximately with the position of the L-shaped soil mark (B: Figure 1B). The second cluster was found in the approximate position of another L-shaped soil mark (A). The approximate coincidence of the two soil marks with the concentrations of brick and tile suggests the identification of the sites of two buildings, possibly barns, dating to the post-medieval period, although no upstanding remains survive. Ploughing and erosion have probably spread brick and tile fragments from these buildings over much of the remainder of Field A, although some of this material may derive from a

recent rubbish dump located beyond the northwest corner of this field.

No prehistoric, Roman or medieval finds were located in Field B, and only a small quantity of widely-distributed post-medieval artifacts was recovered. Although the results of fieldwalking within Fields A and B are not directly comparable because of the differing methods of collection employed, it is clear that the sparse distribution of artifacts in Field B derives from manuring or dumping (notably in the area adjoining the access to Hogoak Lane), and there was insufficient artifactual evidence to suggest any settlement here.

5.0: IMPLICATIONS AND PROPOSALS

5.1: Implications

In the absence of direct archaeological information concerning the site itself, the first stage archaeological assessment (Jones 1990) attempted to characterise the nature of settlement in the area in order to define the archaeological potential of Hogoak. Recent research (e.g. Ford 1987) and rescue fieldwork has demonstrated a more extensive exploitation of the areas of London Clay in East Berkshire during the prehistoric and Roman periods than was hitherto thought. Pipeline construction revealed two intersecting ditches containing Roman pottery at Foliejon Park, east of Hogoak, while more recently a farmstead has been located at Park Farm, Binfield, and a Roman ?farmstead was located during trial-excavations on the line of a gas pipeline approximately 0.6km to the west of the Hogoak site, in a similar topographic location.

These new discoveries indicate a greater potential for archaeological discoveries on the agriculturally poor London Clay, and the fieldwalking assessment at Hogoak has tentatively added a further site to the list of Roman rural settlements located on this subsoil. Further fieldwork is required at Hogoak to confirm the presence of the postulated Roman farmstead here. Transect trenching should be targeted to define the location and approximate extent of the farmstead, and to recover dating

evidence. If a larger scale area excavation is carried out following the evaluation, analysis of the settlement features, and the artifacts and environmental evidence recovered (e.g. carbonised seeds) could assist in our understanding of the economy of this particular settlement, and may even contribute to the wider study of the functions and patterning of the Roman rural economy in East Berkshire.

5.2: Proposals

If the proposed landfill scheme proceeds as presently envisaged, it will necessarily result in the destruction of any archaeological deposits present within the development area. It is now necessary to formulate proposals to provide an informed assessment of the survival, quality, condition and significance of any archaeological remains relating to the possible Roman farmstead.

The scatter of Roman pottery extends over an area of approximately 4 ha. It is proposed that investigations targeted to locate the possible site of the farmstead be carried out in three stages, as follows:

Stage 1. A rapid scan with a Geoscan Research FM18 Fluxgate Gradiometer will pinpoint the location of any major archaeological features within the area of the pottery scatter. This instrument will detect broad areas of manmade disturbance.

Stage 2. A more intensive survey of the most promising geophysical anomalies defined during Stage 1, using the same instrumentation. This will define the form and extent of anomalies of possible archaeological significance within an area of approximately 1 ha.

Stage 3. Subject to the results of Stages 1 and 2 above, selected areas will be examined by trial excavation. This transect trenching will involve approximately an area of 200-300 square metres, dug by hand after the removal of topsoil by machine, to evaluate the depth, survival and nature of archaeological deposits, and to recover dating evidence. An illustrated report will detail the results of Stages 1-3, provide an integrated

interpretation of the results obtained, assess their significance, and detail recommendations for a further archaeological input, if required.

A watching brief should be maintained by a qualified archaeologist to monitor topsoil stripping throughout rest of the the landfill site. Provision should be made for the salvage recording of features revealed during topsoil stripping. This will enable the identification and recording of features before destruction.

No further archaeological response is recommended in relation to the sites of two possible post-medieval buildings, as revealed by aerial photography (Figure 1B), which correlate with the dense demolition deposits of brick and tile of similar date, recovered during fieldwalking.

6.0: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project was sponsored by Shanks and McEwan (Southern) Ltd. The project was directed by Alex Jones, assisted by Laurence Jones (surveying), Ed Newton and David Redhouse. We are grateful to the farmer, Mr Philip Mortimore for permission to carry out the fieldwalking, to Derek Greedy of Shanks and McEwan for assistance, and to Paul Chadwick, Berkshire County Archaeological Officer, for information and discussion of the results. Jane Evans advised on the identification and dating of the finds, which were processed by David Redhouse. The illustrations were drawn by Nigel Dodds: Simon Buteux read and commented on an earlier version of this report, which was compiled at BUFAU by Liz Hooper.

7.0: REFERENCES

Ford, S. 1987. East Berkshire Archaeological Survey. Department of Highways and Plannning, Berkshire County Council.

Jones, A.E. 1990 Hogoak, Berkshire: An Archaeological Assessment 1990. BUFAU Report No. 114.

APPENDIX: QUANTIFICATION OF FINDS.

Table 1: Field A. Finds per square quantified by sherd count

Sq.	Burnt stone	Roman pottery	Medieval pottery	Post-med. brick & tile	Post-med. pottery
1NW	-	-	-	3	1
1SW	-	-	-	1	1
1SE	-	-	-	4	-
2NW	-	-	-	3	-
2NE	-	-	-	3	-
4NW	1	-	-	5	-
4NE	1	-	-	3	-
5NW	-	-	-	3	-
5NE	-	1	-	2	-
7NW	-	-	-	1	-
7NE	2	-	-	-	-
7SW	1	-	-	2	-
7SE	-	-	-	2	-
8NW	-	-	-	3	1
8NE	1	-	-	-	-
8SW	-	-	-	1	-
8SE	-	-	-	5	-
9NW	-	-	-	3	-
9SW	-	-	-	9	-
9SE	-	-	-	12	-
10NW	-	-	-	5	-
10NE	1	-	-	1	-
10SW	-	-	-	4	-
10SE	-	-	-	1	-
11NW	-	-	-	10	-
11NE	1	-	-	2	1
11SW	1	-	-	3	-
11SE	-	1	-	5	-
12NW	-	-	-	3	1
12NE	1	-	-	1	-
12SW	1	-	-	1	-
12SE	-	-	-	2	-
13NW	-	3	-	-	-
13SE	-	-	-	2	-
14NW	-	-	-	2	-
14SW	-	2	-	-	-
15NW	-	-	-	2	-
16NW	-	-	-	2	-
16SE	-	1	-	4	-
17NW	-	-	-	5	-
17SW	-	-	-	4	-
17SE	-	-	-	7	-
18NE	-	-	-	11	-
18SW	-	-	-	4	-

18SE	-	-	-	8	-
19NE	-	1	-	1	-
19SW	-	-	-	5	-
20NW	-	-	-	4	-
20NE	-	-	-	2	-
20SW	-	-	-	11	-
20SE	-	-	-	4	-
21NW	-	-	-	1	-
21NE	-	-	-	1	-
21SW	-	-	-	3	-
21SE	-	-	-	3	-
22NW	-	-	-	8	-
22NE	-	-	-	29	-
22SW	-	-	-	3	-
22SE	-	-	-	1	1
23NE	-	-	-	6	-
23SW	-	2	-	61	-
23SE	-	-	-	143	-
24SW	-	-	-	22	-
24SE	-	-	-	2	-
25NW	-	-	-	7	4
25NE	-	-	-	1	-
25SW	-	-	-	8	1
25SE	-	-	-	5	-
26NW	-	-	-	6	-
26NE	-	-	-	4	-
26SW	-	-	-	11	-
26SE	-	-	-	2	-
27NW	-	-	-	2	-
27SW	-	-	-	9	-
28NW	-	-	-	4	-
28SW	-	-	-	4	-
28SE	-	-	-	3	-
29SW	-	-	-	5	-
29SE	-	1	-	7	-
30NW	-	-	-	9	5
30SW	-	-	-	3	-
30SE	-	-	-	2	-
31NW	-	-	-	3	-
31SW	-	-	-	2	-
31SE	-	-	-	2	-
32NE	-	-	-	4	-
32SW	1	-	-	3	-
33NW	-	-	-	7	-
33NE	1	-	-	-	-
33SE	-	-	-	13	-
34NW	-	-	-	25	1
34NE	1	-	-	8	-
34SW	-	1?	1	146	-
34SE	-	-	-	9	-
35NW	-	-	-	2	-
35NE	-	-	-	132	-
35SW	-	-	-	14	-
35SE	-	-	-	27	-

36NW	-	-	-	5	-
36NE	-	-	-	1	-
36SW	-	-	-	32	-
36SE	-	-	-	6	-
37NE	-	-	-	1	-
37SE	-	-	-	17	-
39NW	-	-	-	1	3
39NE	-	-	-	42	-
39SW	-	-	-	14	2
39SE	-	-	-	80	-
40NW	-	-	-	9	-
40NE	-	-	-	2	-
40SW	-	-	1	94	-
40SE	-	-	-	12	-
41NW	-	-	-	4	-
41SW	-	-	-	18	-
41SE	-	-	-	2	-
42SW	-	-	-	5	-
TOTAL	14	13	2	1200	22
	(11.12%)	(1.04%)	(0.16%)	(95.23%)	(1.76%)

Note: Squares without finds omitted

Table 2: Roman pottery quantified by weight

Square	Weight in gms.	Type
5NE	9	Samian.
11SE	8	Sandy Grey Ware.
13NW	26	Sandy Grey Ware (2) Black Burnished Ware (1)
14SW	15	Sandy Grey Ware.
16SE	10	Sandy Grey Ware.
19NE	23	Sandy Grey Ware.
23SW	12	Sandy Grey Ware (2).
29SE	5	Sandy Grey Ware.
34SW	27	Sandy Grey Ware.

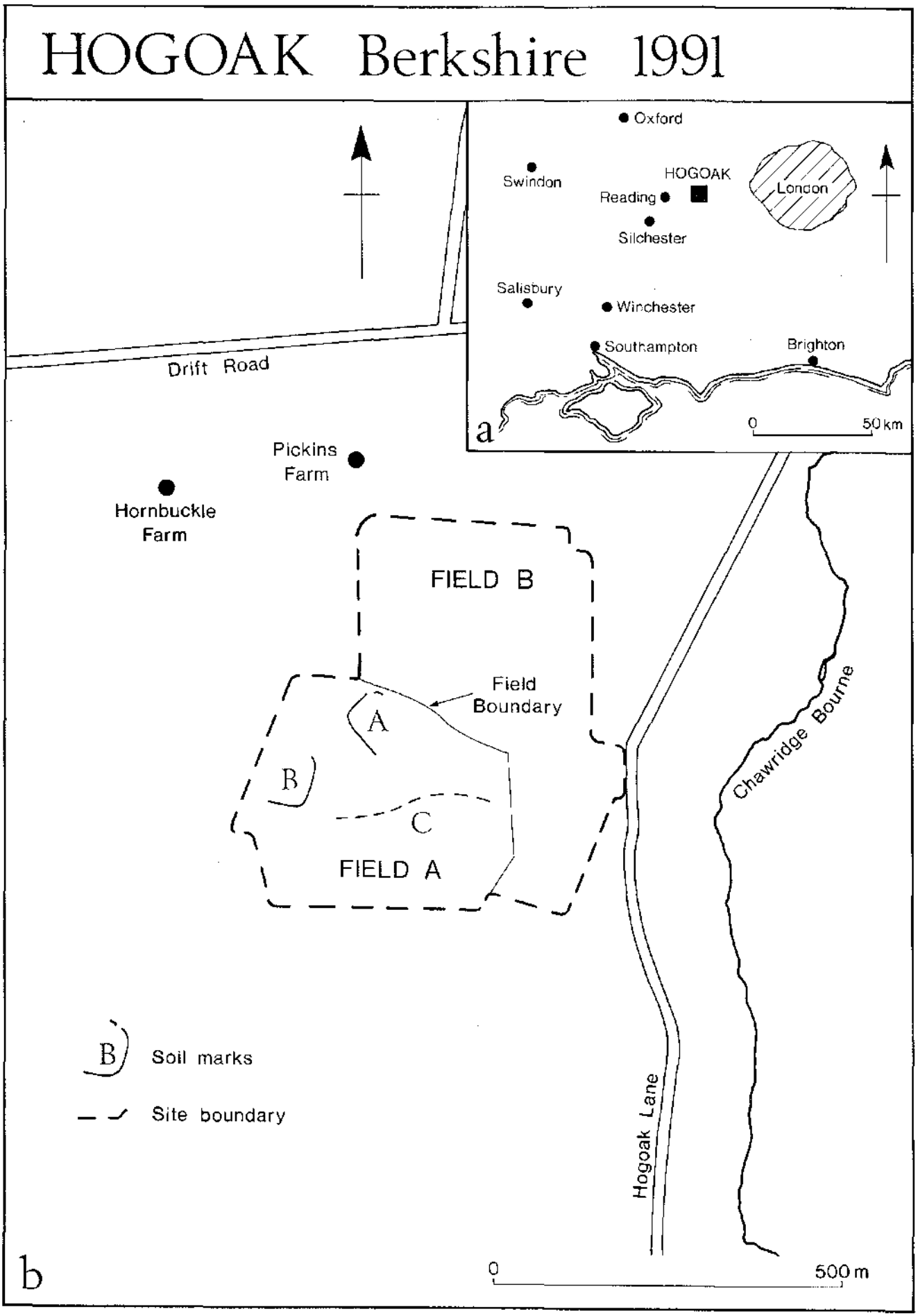
HOGOAK Berkshire 1991
Oxford
Swindon
HOGOAK
Reading
London
Silchester
Salisbury
Winchester
Southampton
Brighton
0
50 km
a
Drift Road
Pickins Farm
Hornbuckle Farm
FIELD B
Field Boundary
A
B
C
FIELD A
Chawridge Bourne
Hogoak Lane
B
Soil marks
Site boundary
b
0
500 m

Figure 1

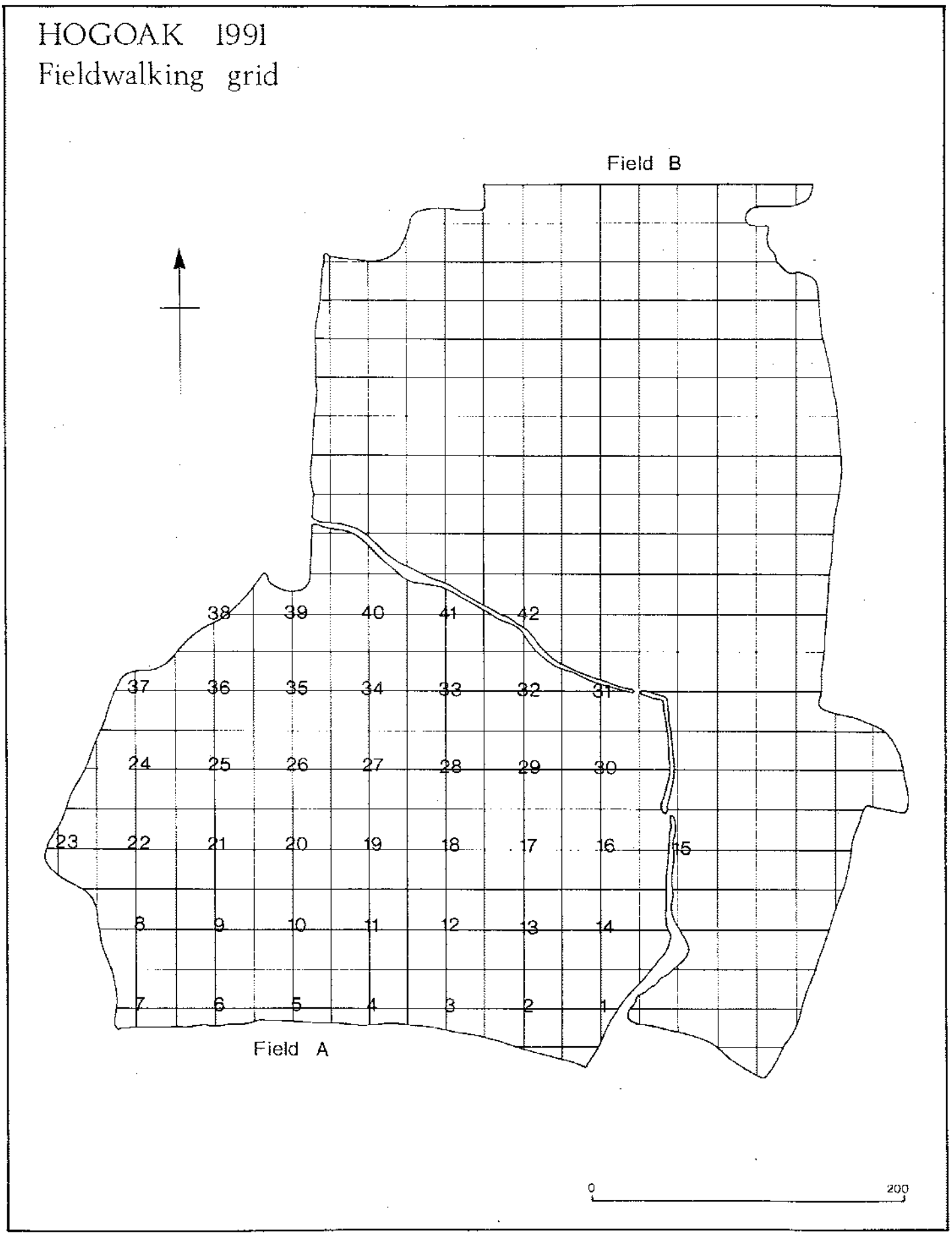
HOGOAK 1991
Fieldwalking grid
Field B
38 39 40 41 42
37 36 35 34 33 32 31
24 25 26 27 28 29 30
23 22 21 20 19 18 17 16 15
8 9 10 11 12 13 14
7 6 5 4 3 2 1
Field A
0
200

Figure 2

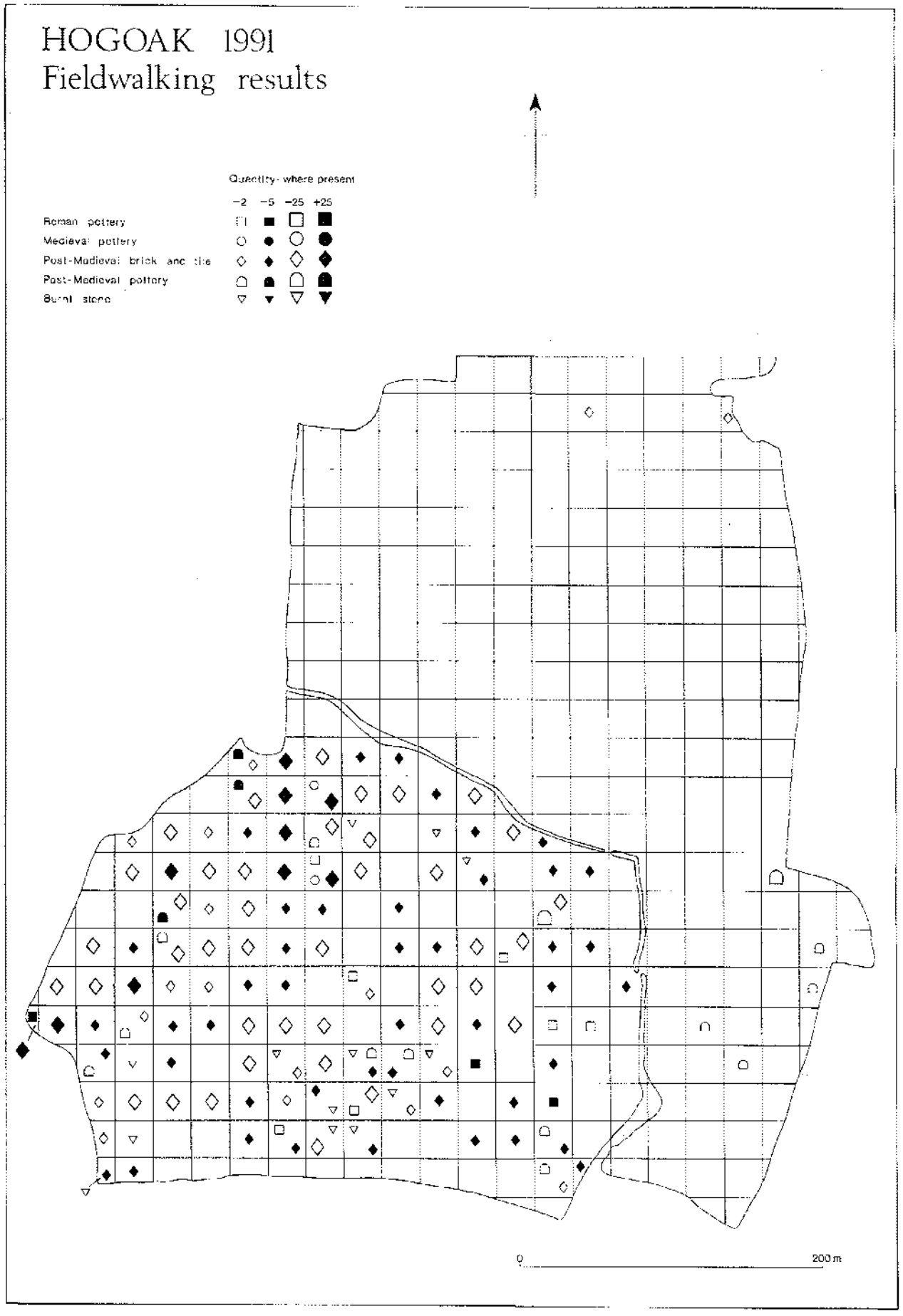
HOGOAK 1991
Fieldwalking results
Quantity - where present
−2 −5 −25 +25
Roman pottery
Medieval pottery
Post-Medieval brick and tile
Post-Medieval pottery
Burnt stone
0
200 m

Figure 3