

A FLINT DAGGER FOUND NEAR CURZON LODGE, LONGCLIFFE, BRASSINGTON, DERBYSHIRE

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INTRODUCTION

The flint dagger was found by Mrs. J. Harrison of Hill Top Farm, Aldwark, in September 2001 after the field had been ploughed and resown with grass. As this was an exceptional and rare find it was thought by the author that it should be fully recorded, together with other newly discovered material found nearby.

THE FINDSPOT

The site of the find (SK 23625662) lies on a shelf, 310m OD, overlooking the Griff Grange Valley. This valley runs down from Longcliffe to Grange Mill with Aldwark lying on the opposite side of the valley (Fig. 1). The land around slopes gently up to c. 340m on well-drained loams.

At the same time, a small end scraper (F) was found close by and possibly associated with the dagger (Fig. 1). Later this area was searched by the author who found another flint, a possible burin to the south-east (F) and a possible levelled barrow (*) to the north-east. This comprised a round area of stones, c. 6m in diameter. There were no concentrations of archaeological material to suggest a settlement of any kind.

The Flint Dagger (Fig. 2)

The dagger is 10.8cm long by 2.6cm wide and the maximum thickness is 7mm. It is lanceolate in form and is made from good quality, dark brown flint slightly translucent in places, and bifacially worked. There is one notch part way along its length which appears to be modern and was possibly caused by a plough share.

Lithics from the same field (Fig. 2)

End-side scraper, light brown flint, retouched on nose and sides.

Possible burin, light brown flint, worked on nose and left dorsal edge.

Core flake in light brown flint (not illustrated).

Other archaeological material

Before the nearby quarry was extended to its present position, the author searched the area many times during the earth moving operations and located three sites.

Site 1 (SO 236566)

A number of undiagnostic struck flints.

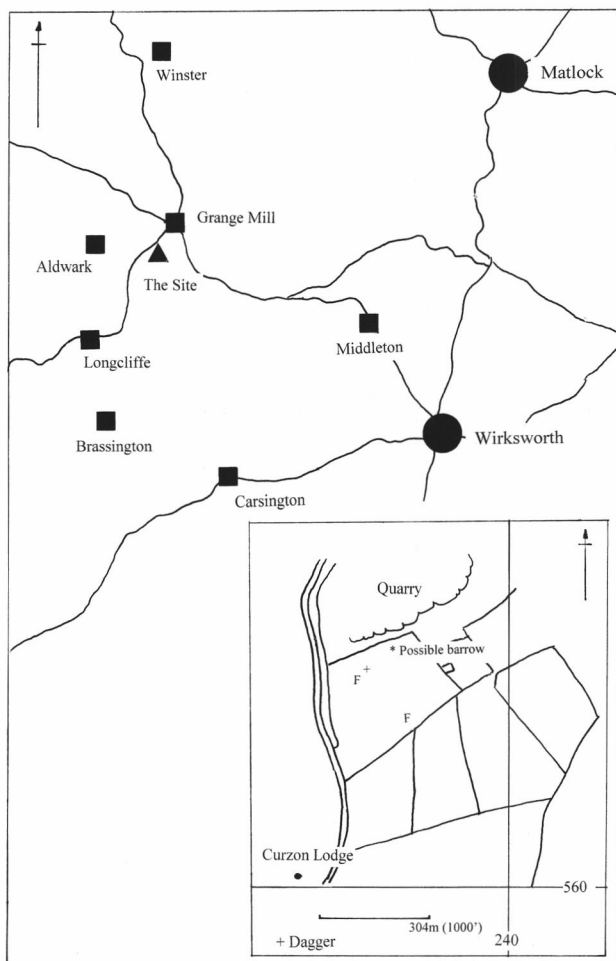


Fig. 1: Site location.

Site 2 (SO 23685635)

A large number of struck flint and chert flakes with Mesolithic characteristics and other material possibly Neolithic to Early Bronze Age, including four scrapers, a possible unfinished leaf arrowhead and a retouched blade (Fig. 3).

- 1 Discoidal scaper. Flint, blue-grey.
- 2 Scraper. Flint, grey mottled, cortex on one edge.
- 3 Side scraper. Flint, white.
- 4 ?Arrowhead. Flint, grey-brown, semi-translucent, possible unfinished leaf arrowhead.
- 5 Thumb scraper. Flint, light brown, semi-translucent.
- 6 Blade. Flint, brown, fine retouch along both long edges and nose (Mesolithic).

Three sherds of coarse, thick, plain prehistoric pottery and four sherds of Romano-British pottery were found at the same site. One of the latter is black burnished ware, the others Derbyshire ware.

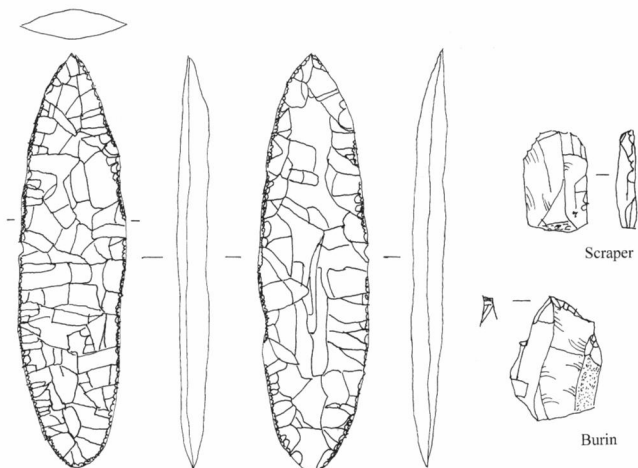


Fig. 2: Flint dagger, scraper and burin (scale — as for Fig. 3).

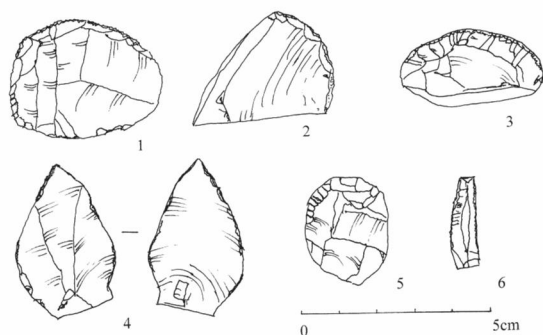


Fig. 3: Flints from Site 2 (see text for numbered descriptions).

Site 3 (SO 239567)

A number of undiagnostic struck flint flakes; a piece of hematite (50x40x40mm) polished smooth on one side; and a sherd of coarse, thick plain prehistoric pottery.

DISCUSSION

The flint dagger, though rare, was not an isolated find. Other prehistoric material has been recorded earlier from the Longcliffe-Griff Grange area (Makepeace 2000), including two round barrows lying to the south-east. In addition Neolithic pottery and prehistoric artefacts have been found by the author in the quarry near Aldwark, on the opposite side of the Griff Grange Valley (Makepeace forthcoming).

This dagger appears to be similar to one found at Kenslow, Middleton-by-Youlgreave, Derbyshire. Whilst others have been found at Ringham Low (Monyash), Green Low (Brassington), Biggin, Kenslow Meer and on Tithe Land, Middleton (Howarth 1899, 39). Bateman mentions another spearhead (dagger) from Green Low (Alsop Moor) but whether this is the same one mentioned by Howarth is not known (Marsden 1977, 30-31).

Other lanceolate daggers have been found as far afield as Bryn Panel, Teleglwys, Montgomeryshire (Savory 1980, 91) and Amesbury, Wiltshire (Annable and Simpson 1964, 89). This type of dagger seems to be associated with Beaker burials, as is indicated by the Amesbury example and possibly the one from Kenslow. Other lanceolate daggers appear to have been found at random unassociated with any other finds or features and whether they have come from ploughed out burials or were 'lost' specimens is not known.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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REFERENCES

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