



University of
Leicester

Archaeological Services

**A fieldwalking survey at land east of
Ashlawn Road, Rugby, Warwickshire**

NGR: SP 51923 72916

John Thomas



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**An archaeological evaluation by
fieldwalking on land off Ashlawn Road,
Rugby, Warwickshire**

NGR: SP 51923 72916 centre

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For: WSP Environmental Ltd.

Approved By:

Signed:  **Date:** 10th October 2011

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An archaeological evaluation by fieldwalking survey on land off Ashlawn Road, Warwickshire SP 451923 272916 centre

1. Summary

An archaeological evaluation by fieldwalking survey was carried out by ULAS for WSP Environmental Ltd. in October 2011 on land off Ashlawn Road, Rugby, Warwickshire SP 51923 72916, in advance of proposed development. Apart from modern material, the survey recovered a generally sparse scatter of medieval to post-medieval material. A sparse scatter of lithic material included several retouched flakes and a flake-core of probable Neolithic-Bronze Age date while a straight-edged scraper may be more firmly assigned a Bronze Age date. No Romano-British material was recovered. The archive will be deposited with Rugby Museum and Art Gallery under accession code RTA.1009 in due course

2. Location, Topography and Geology

The survey was carried out in advance of a proposed new cemetery and crematorium development (The Rugby and Daventry Crematorium and Cemetery) on land to the west of Ridgeway Farm in Rugby. Fieldwalking took place on 3-10-2011 & 4-10-2011.

The site lies within the parish of Hillmorton, in the district of Rugby, Warwickshire, and is situated to the south-east of the central urban core of the town, just south of the junction of Ashlawn and Percival Roads (Fig. 1). The development area is situated south of the Ashlawn Road Sports Ground, east of the Great Central Walk Nature Reserve and west of Ridgeway Farm. It is demarcated to the south by the modern boundary with Northamptonshire and the M45. It is bordered to the west by the cutting for the old Great Central Railway. The site occupies a raised position with expansive views over gently undulating topography to the south-east and south-west.

The site is currently in use as agricultural land and was in early vegetation stages at the time of the survey. The proposed development area is approximately 12.8ha in size of which c.10.4ha was available for the fieldwalking surveys.

The British Geological Survey of England and Wales shows that the underlying geology comprises Dunsmore gravels in the western area of the site and Dunsmore gravels and sands to the east, all overlaying Charmouth Mudstone formations. The site lies at a height of around 120m above OD, with the higher points forming the northern edge of the area before gradually sloping off to the south.

3. Historical Background

A desk-based assessment has been undertaken by WSP Environmental Ltd., on behalf of Daventry District Council (WSP 2011). The report considered a study area with a radius of 1000m around the site to assess the potential for archaeological remains on the development site. The results of the assessment were based on records of known sites recorded on the Warwickshire Historic Environment Record (HER) of archaeological and historical significance.

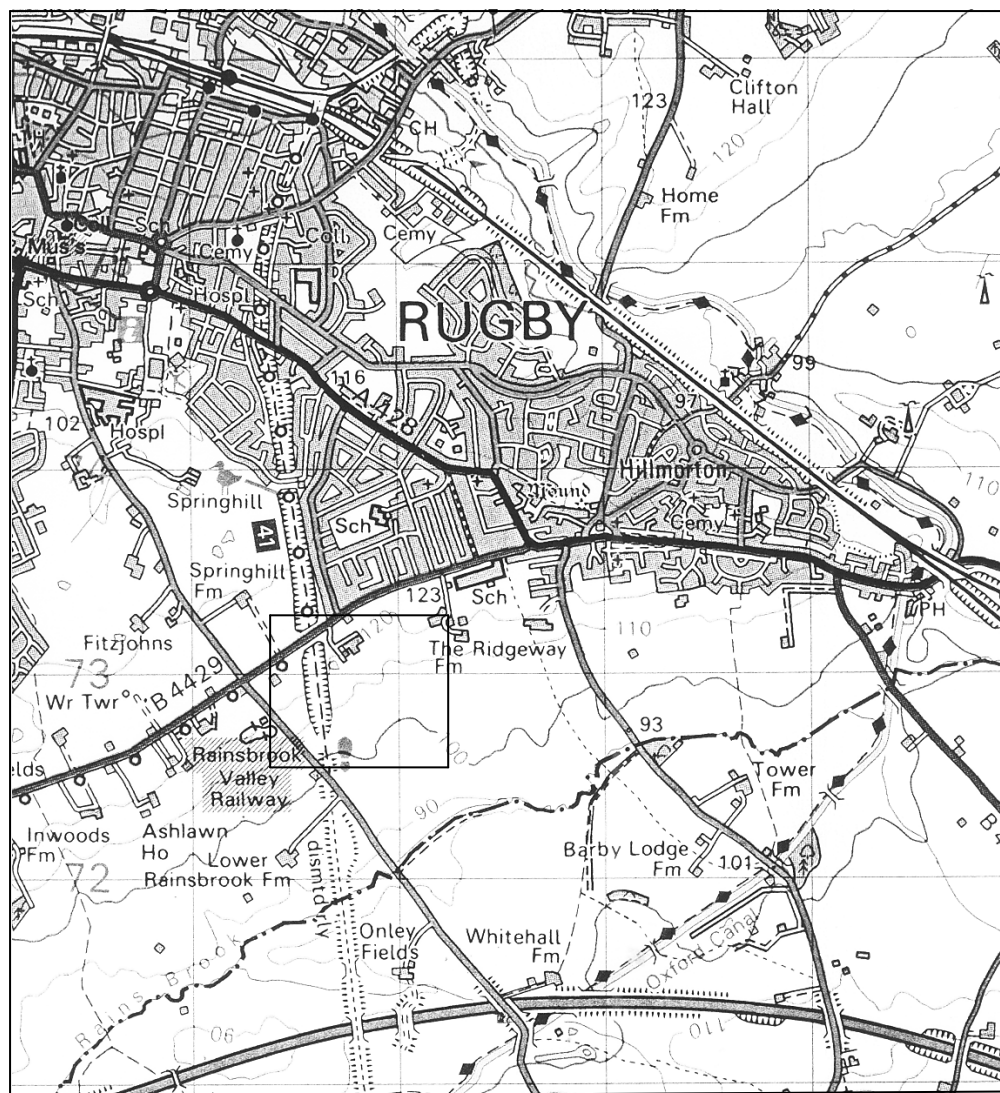


Figure 1 Location of site (Figs 2-5 outlined)

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As discussed in the Desk-Based Assessment for the site (WSP 2011), the nature of the available evidence did not allow for a definitive assessment of the archaeological potential of the site. This was based, in part, on the relatively low levels of modern archaeological investigation in the vicinity, but also due to the limited number of records for archaeological activity near to the site.

Potential for prehistoric archaeology is illustrated by flint artefacts dating to the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods that were recovered from the site in the 1980's. Although there is no existing reason to support a view that significant activity took place on the site or within the wider study area during these periods, there is clearly some potential when the site's topography and low levels of modern disturbance are taken into account.

Evidence for later prehistoric (Bronze and Iron Age) and Roman activity within the study area is poorly represented in the HER. However Iron Age and Roman activity is widespread in Warwickshire and the site lies close to the Watling Street Roman

road. Six Roman coins were recovered from the parish of Clifton and Dunsmore, north-east of Hillmorton, as listed by the Portable Antiquities Scheme, but these are the only nearby artefacts. A similarly limited level of information is available for activities relating to the post-Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods.

HER information does provide a good understanding of the wider area within the medieval, post-medieval, Imperial and Modern periods, but does not record data specific to the site itself. This general lack of information is compounded by the lack of surviving estate or tithe maps for Hillmorton. However the site occupies a position within the periphery of field systems known during the medieval and post-medieval periods and may have been an integral component of the agro-pastoral regime at this time.

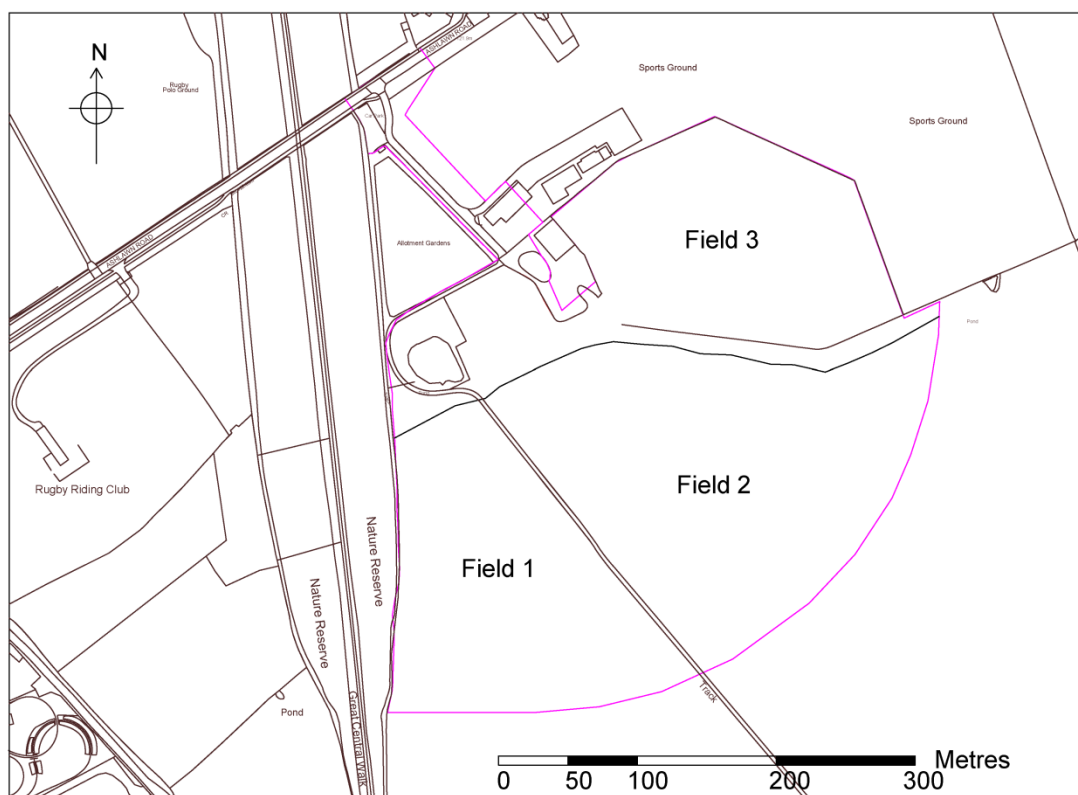


Figure 2 The development area with fields walked (adapted from mapping supplied by WSP).

4. Aims

The overall aim of the fieldwalking survey is to examine the surface of the fields for cultural material disturbed by ploughing in order to make an assessment of the presence, extent and date of any potential underlying archaeological deposits within the proposed development area.

5. Methods

Three fields (Fields 1, 2 & 3) were available for survey (Fig 2). All had been ploughed and left to weather, but had not been harrowed or rolled so the surface was very uneven. The southern edge of the proposed development area had been marked out, and the relevant parts of each of the two southern fields (Fields 1 & 2) ploughed

for the survey. The third field (Field 3) in the northern part of the development area had been entirely ploughed.

Fieldwalking transects were laid out on a 10m grid, the ground scanned for artefacts approximately 1 metre either side of this transect line, giving a theoretical 20% sample coverage of each field.

Artefacts of any antiquity were recovered from the surface and their position logged as small finds with hand-held GPS units. These were showing an accuracy between 2-3m throughout most of the survey. Bearing in mind the dispersion factor found in fieldwalking surveys (Yorston et al 1990) this is an appropriate resolution for the aims of this project). Modern (i.e. post 1700) artefacts were not recovered deliberately, although inevitably some recovered artefacts turned out to be modern after cleaning and identification.

Two hand held GPS units were used, each generating a sequential small find number with one starting from 001 and the other from 100.

The light was good on both survey days although the bright low sunlight caused a certain amount of shadowing on the field surface, particularly in the afternoon. The two southern fields (Fields 1 & 2) both contained early-growth crops, but were not sufficiently grown to hamper visibility.

The work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Codes of Conduct and Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 2008).

6. Results

6.1 The lithic material (Fig 3)

All the lithics recovered were flint and probably date from the Neolithic to Bronze Age period. Generally the amount was sparse although in broad terms a fairly loose concentration of finds is apparent towards the southern edge of the development site. The finds can be seen as forming part of a wider scatter of lithic artefacts from the general area. The pieces identified as natural are not shown. Details of individual finds can be found in the lithics report (Appendix 2).

6.2 Medieval and late medieval material (Fig 4)

The survey recovered a general scatter of medieval to late medieval artefacts. The majority of the material is pottery although there are some tile fragments in evidence. The amount of pottery is not particularly large and the artefacts were probably introduced to the site via manuring scatters throughout the medieval period. Chilvers Coton is the most common ware. Details of individual finds can be found in the ceramic finds report (Appendix 1).

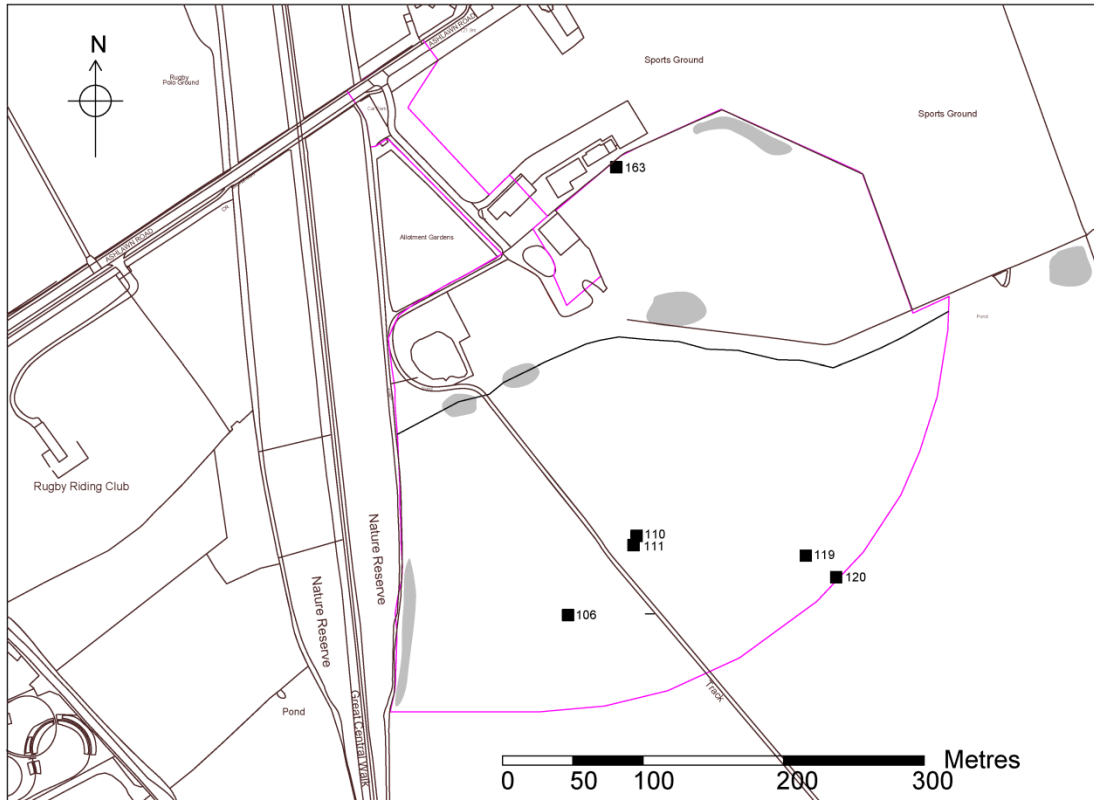


Figure 3 All lithic material shown in relation to previously recorded chance finds indicated by grey shading (adapted from mapping supplied by WSP).

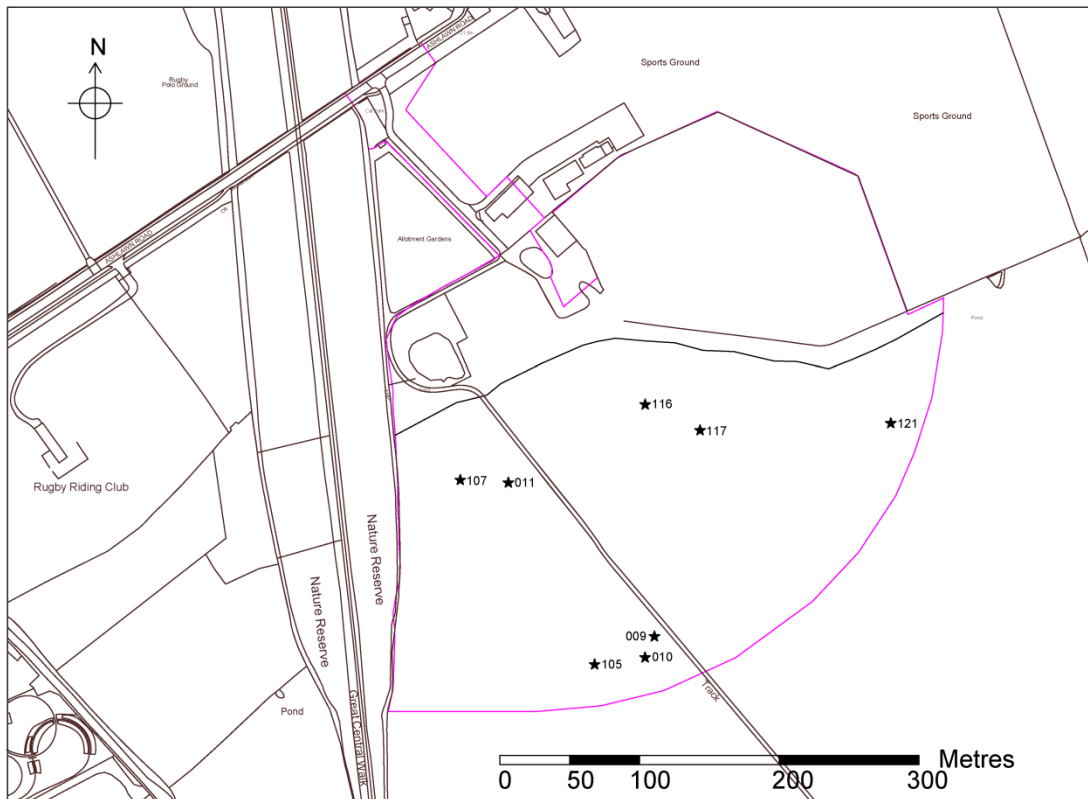


Figure 4 The medieval and late medieval artefacts (adapted from mapping supplied by WSP).

6.3 The post-medieval to early modern artefacts (Fig 5)

The post-medieval to early modern assemblage is slightly denser than that for the medieval period, but offers a broadly similar pattern. As with the earlier period the post-medieval and early modern artefacts likely represent items that have been brought to the site during manuring. The overall lack of diagnostically modern material may indicate that these fields were turned over to pasture in more recent times.

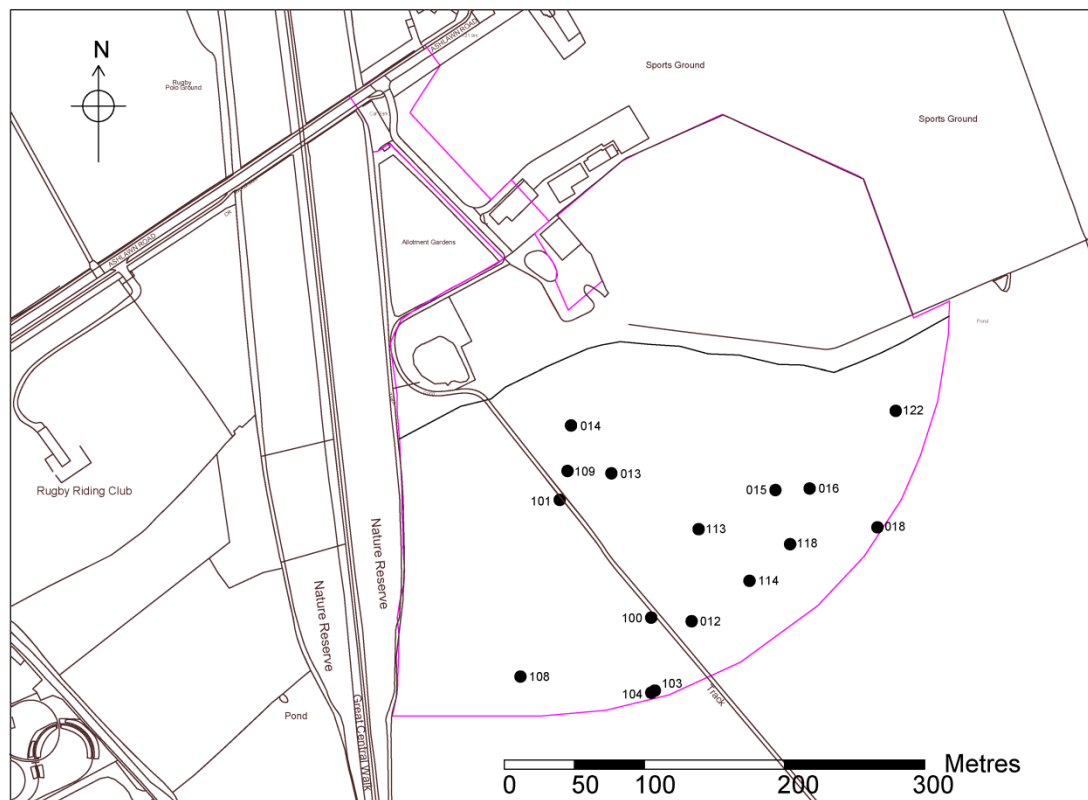


Figure 5 The post-medieval to early modern artefacts (adapted from mapping supplied by WSP).

7. Discussion

The survey identified no convincing concentrations of material which might indicate the presence of underlying archaeological sites. The lithic scatter is sparse enough to be a background scatter although it also can be seen as part of a wider spread of similar artefacts from the chance finds previously made in the north of the area (Figure 3). From the information provided some similarities between the new finds and the previously recorded scatters can be made, principally that they utilise flake technology and make use of locally available pebbles, although the previous finds may include a Mesolithic element from some items using blade technology. Typologically they may all be of a similar date however the finds recovered during this exercise suggests that the date range for the overall scatter might be extended to include the Bronze Age. The lithics are typical of similar material found as scatters throughout the Midlands (Clay 2006, 112).

The amount of medieval /late medieval pieces is meagre enough to be explained as manuring scatters from nearby settlements. There was a total lack of Romano-British material from all three fields. Despite the low numbers in artefacts there is an

interesting contrast in the amount of material from Fields 1 & 2 and Field 3, which only yielded a single piece of worked flint, perhaps suggesting different uses for these areas at some point.

8. Archive

The archive consists of:

3 *pro-forma* fieldwalking diary sheets

1 annotated plan showing crop status

1 box of lithic and non-lithic finds

The archive will be deposited with Rugby Art Gallery & Museum under accession code RTA.1009 in due course.

9. Acknowledgements

The survey was undertaken by Gerwyn Richards and John Thomas and the project was managed by Dr. Patrick Clay. The lithics were identified by Lynden Cooper and the medieval & post-medieval pottery by Nicholas J. Cooper.

10. Bibliography

Clay, P., 2002 *The Prehistory of the East Midlands Claylands*. Leicester: Leicester Archaeology Monographs No. 9

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Appendix 1: The finds (non lithic)**Pottery and Tile** *Nicholas J. Cooper***Introduction**

A total of 24 sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery was recovered during the survey. The material has been classified using the ULAS Fabric Series (which incorporates fabrics across the Midlands) (Davies and Sawday 1999, 166) with common ware names and dates tabulated alongside. Warwickshire fabrics (unpublished manual) are also cited for the medieval and early post-medieval wares. The material has been quantified by sherd count only as appropriate for survey material.

Results

The identification of the assemblage is tabulated below (Table 1).

Table 1 Identification of medieval and post-medieval pottery from Hillmorton.

Rugby Hillmorton Fieldwalking Survey				
Field	Sf no.	Fabric	Sherds	Dating
1	9	CC1/WW01/A	1	Chilvers Coton c. 1200-1400
1	10	CW2	1	late med/post-med 1475-1750
1	11	?CC1/WW01/A	1	?Chilvers Coton medieval c.1200-1400
1	100	EA2	1	post-medieval earthenware 17th/18th
1	101	EA2	1	post-medieval earthenware 17th/18th
1	103	EA6	1	post-medieval earthenware 16th/18th
1	104	EA2	1	post-medieval earthenware 17th/18th
1	105	MS/SQ	1	medieval sandy ware 1200-1400
1	107	MP2	1	Midland Purple 1375-1550
1	108	EA6	1	post-medieval earthenware 16th/18th
2	12	EA2	1	post-medieval earthenware 17th/18th
2	13	MY	1	Midland Yellow 1500-1725
2	14	EA2	1	post-medieval earthenware 17th/18th
2	15	CBM	1	Field drain 18th/19th century
2	16	EA7/SLPW	1	Staffs slipware 17th/18th
2	18	CBM	1	Field drain 18th/19th century
2	109	EA	1	post-medieval
2	113	EA	1	post-medieval
2	114	EA6	1	post-medieval earthenware 16th/18th
2	116	?CC1/WW01/A	1	?Chilvers Coton medieval 1200-1400
2	117	MS /SQ	1	medieval sandy 1200-1400
2	118	CW2/CIST	1	late med/post-med 1475-1750
2	121	MP2	1	Midland Purple 1375-1550
2	122	EA2	1	post-medieval earthenware 17th/18th
Total			24	

Discussion

Field 1

A total of nine sherds was recovered, which can be split into two chronological groups. The first comprises the, noticeably more abraded, medieval sherds (9, 11, and 105) which probably all derive from kilns at Chilvers Coton, near Nuneaton (Warwickshire Fabric WW01 Chilvers Coton Fabric A), and probably result from the manuring of the open fields during the 13th and 14th century. The second group comprises sherds of late medieval Midland Purple (MP2) from Ticknall and post-medieval earthenwares including products likely to be from Chilvers Coton (EA2) if not Ticknall and probably dating from the 16th to 18th centuries. This material again probably results from manuring of the fields in more recent times.

Field 2

A total of 13 sherds was recovered. The assemblage shows the same broad division as Field 1, but with just two medieval sherds, (116 and 117), again probably from Chilvers Coton. The late medieval wares comprise Midland Purple and Cistercian Ware, whilst the post-medieval earthen wares include Midland Yellow (13), and a Staffordshire slipware plate (16). The group also includes two fragments from the base of a field drain (15 and 18).

Summary

Overall, the assemblage is typical of Midland cultivated land across the medieval and post-medieval periods. The complete lack of Roman material is not necessarily surprising if the land was not cultivated or was woodland, but otherwise you might have expected the occasional sherd from manuring. At the other end of the timeline, the lack of diagnostically modern period material such as Staffordshire pearl wares and cream wares of 18th or 19th century date might point to this land being under pasture in recent times.

References

Davies, S. and Sawday, D. 1999 'The post-Roman Pottery and Tile' in A. Connor and R. Buckley *Roman and Medieval Occupation at Causeway Lane, Leicester*, 165-213. Leicester Archaeology Monograph 5. Leicester: University of Leicester School of Archaeology and Ancient History.

Warwickshire Museum Field Services, 1998 *Warwickshire Medieval and Post Medieval Pottery Type Series Manual*. Warwickshire County Council, Archaeology. (Unpublished).

Appendix 2: The Lithics

Identified by L.P. Cooper

Six pieces of worked flint and five natural pieces were recovered. All were of local semi-translucent till-derived material. The natural pieces had some secondary removals but all were irregular and most likely to have been caused by plough damage. The worked pieces were mostly of a flake, non-laminar, technology and are probably of a Neolithic-Bronze Age date. A single straight-edged scraper (119) can be ascribed a general Bronze Age date. Apart from the scraper, much of the other material displays similarities with previously recorded lithic scatters from the site.

Field	SF No.	Description	Comment/Dating
2	019	Natural	Pot-lid/frost fracture
2	020	Natural	-
1	106	Flake core	Neolithic/Bronze Age
2	110	Flake	Neolithic/Bronze Age
2	111	Flake	Neolithic/Bronze Age
2	112	Natural	-
2	115	Natural	-
2	119	Scraper (straight-edged)	Bronze Age
2	120	Retouched flake	Neolithic/Bronze Age
3	162	Natural	-
3	163	Retouched natural flake	Neolithic/Bronze Age

Table 2 The lithics (see Figure 3)

Lithic material had previously been located in the field from chance finds to the north (WSP 2011, 14). It is difficult to comment on the identifications included in the HER not knowing the authority of the person as a lithic specialist. However, it is assumed the author has identified the pieces correctly. The lack of chronologically diagnostic tool types means that the chronological position of the lithics has to be attempted from technological criteria and surface condition. It would seem that the lithics may represent palimpsests of activity of Mesolithic and later prehistoric date. The blade technology and the presence of corticated and patinated pieces may represent Mesolithic activity while the flake technology and lack of patination may be taken to broadly indicate Neolithic and/or Bronze Age activity. Certainly, the material from the recent survey would seem to be of a general later prehistoric date.

WSP 2011 *Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment of the Proposed Rugby and Daventry Crematorium Site, Hillmorton, Rugby*. WSP Environmental Ltd April 2011.

Appendix 3: Oasis

INFORMATION REQUIRED	EXAMPLE
Project Name	Rugby Hillmorton, Ashlawn Road
Project Type	Fieldwalking
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	John Thomas
Previous/Future work	Previous: DBA. Future: unknown
Current Land Use	arable
Development Type	Cemetery and Crematorium
Reason for Investigation	PPS5
Position in the Planning Process	Pre-determination
Site Co ordinates	SP 51923 72916
Start/end dates of field work	October 2011
Archive Recipient	Rugby Museums and Art Gallery
Height min/max	120m OD
Study Area	12.8ha
Finds	Prehistoric, medieval, post-medieval, modern

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