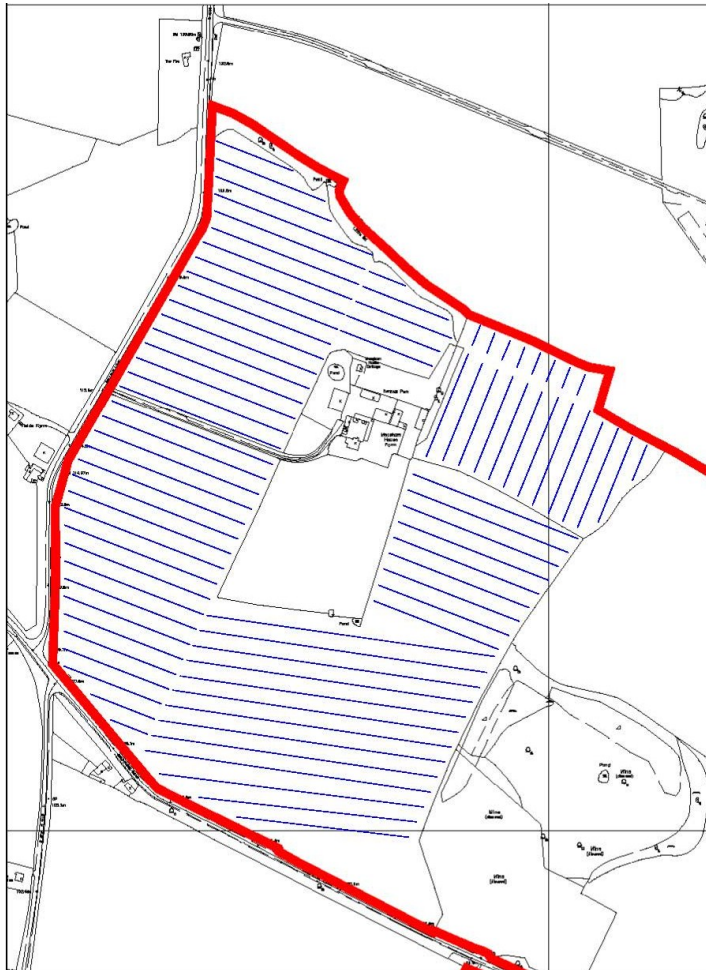




University of
Leicester

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological
Fieldwalking Survey
at Minorca North,
Measham, Leicestershire
(SK 350 122)**




Roger Kipling

ULAS Report No 2013-108
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Fieldwalking Survey
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Measham, Leicestershire
(SK 350 122)**

Roger Kipling

For: UK Coal

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An Archaeological Fieldwalking Survey at Minorca North, Measham, Leicestershire(SK 350 122)

Roger Kipling

Summary

An archaeological fieldwalking survey was undertaken in April 2013 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf of UK Coal on land at Minorca North, Measham, Leicestershire. The fieldwork was undertaken as a preliminary to possible opencast coal mining. The archaeological fieldwalking survey provided indications of archaeological activity of likely Roman date in the eastern area, reflecting the results of the geophysical survey of 2012. The remainder of the survey area appeared largely devoid of archaeology, with low numbers of prehistoric flint flakes and several sherds of Roman and medieval pottery recovered across the general survey area.

The site archive will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council under the accession number X.A111.2012.

Introduction

An archaeological fieldwalking survey was undertaken at Minorca North, Measham, Leicestershire. An archaeological desk-based assessment commissioned for the adjacent area to the south (Hunt 2008) established that three known archaeological sites lie within the application area itself, with 17th -18th century coal shafts having been identified in the north-western section of the area (MLE4768). The name Glasshouse field relates to a glass working furnace identified on a 1730 map (MLE4769). The site of Measham Hall dating from 1769 and demolished in 1959 lies to the east of the site (MLE16196). To the north of the site are records of a rectilinear enclosure (MLE4799) and pit alignment (MLE4800) probably of Iron Age date. To the east are the sites of a post-medieval watermill (MLE16691) and windmill (MLE4914).

In consequence Leicestershire County Council, acting in its role as Local Planning Authority, recommended the need for a programme of archaeological investigation comprising a programme of fieldwalking survey. The investigation was required in order to provide an adequate sample of the development area and to assess the likely archaeological impact of the development proposals. The agreed scheme was set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation (ULAS 2013).

Work was undertaken in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework Section 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment (DCLG March 2012). All archaeological work was in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) Code of Conduct (2010) and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2008). The *LCC Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological work Leicestershire and Rutland* (1997) was also adhered to.

Site Description, Topography and Geology

The proposed development site (SK 350 122) is located *c.*1km east of Measham town centre on the eastern side of the B4116 (Gallows Lane) between the Swepstone Road and the Bosworth Road. The majority of the application area lies within the parish of Measham and the total area of the site is *c.*137 ha.

The site consists of several arable fields lying to the east and the west of the old mine workings of the now disused Minorca coal mine, which is characterised by substantial spoil heaps and marshy areas, covered in rough grassland. The ground undulates considerably, and the spoil heaps lie several metres above the surrounding ground. The majority of the arable fields fall towards the dykes that surround them and rise towards the centre; the land lies at a height of between 93-109m OD.

The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain Sheet 155 (Atherstone) indicates the underlying geology to consist of Glacial Till, with alluvium and glaciofluvial deposits in the centre of the site close to the Gilwiskaw Brook. This overlies Pennine Middle Coal Measures and Moira formation mudstones and sandstones.

Archaeological and Historical Background

A search of the Historic Environment Record (HER) within 1km of the development area has revealed evidence for archaeological sites from the prehistoric to the post-medieval period. Three HER sites lie within the application area with other archaeological finds and sites are located within 500m of the site.

Prehistoric

A tumulus in Mill Field is noted approximately 100m south-west of the site and there are strong indications for prehistoric activity around it (**MLE17120** SK 418 049). Field-walking carried out both in the 1980s and in 2008/9 has produced various prehistoric flints, some of which are thought to be Mesolithic and there is apparently a concentration around the mound. A Neolithic axe was found in 2009. The largest accumulation of later flint was also around the mill mound, including early Bronze Age scrapers, cores and waste flakes. Further flint artefacts, comprising ten flakes, a blade, seven cores, four scrapers, five burins and six pot boilers, were found during trial trenching on the mound in 2009.

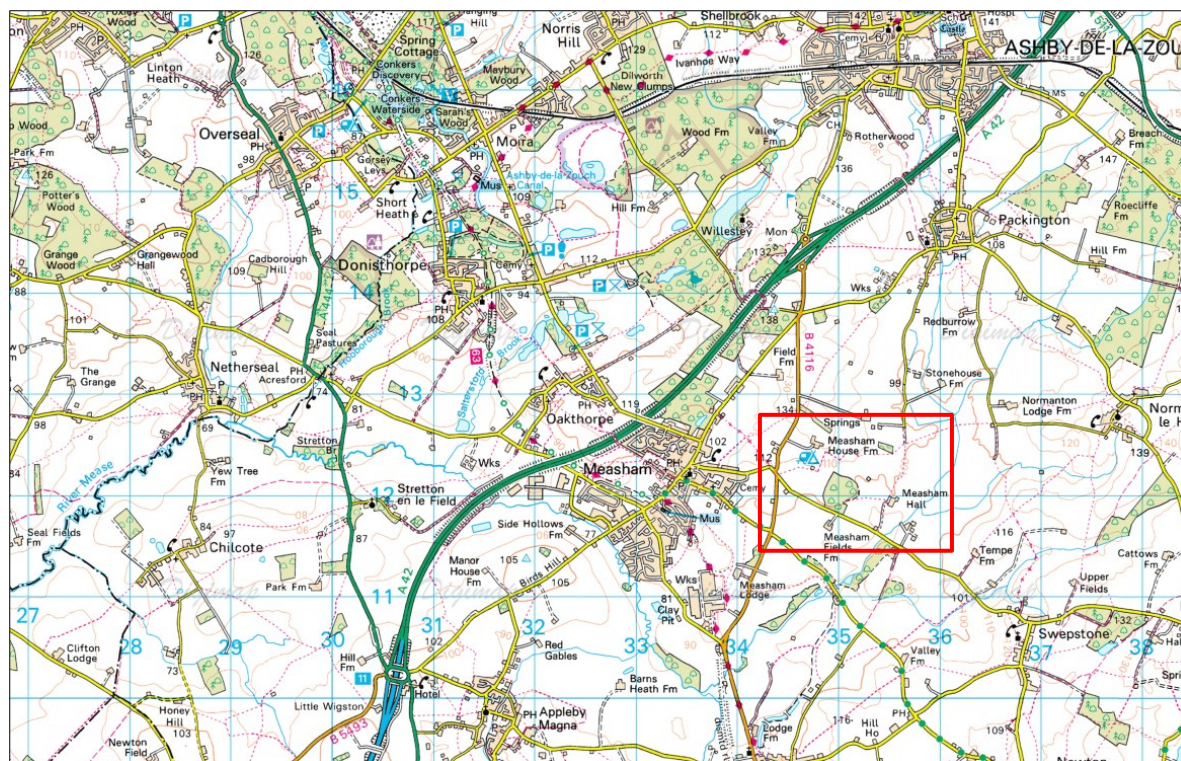


Figure 1: Site Location (Scale 1:50 000)

Reproduced from the Landranger 1:50000 map by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 1996. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100029495

There is further evidence for prehistoric activity in the area. In 1975, a complete beehive quern (Late Iron Age) was found whilst deep ploughing in a field east of Osbaston Hall, c.700m south of the area (**MLE6544** SK 425 044). Two possible Iron Age rectangular enclosures linked by ditches are located approximately 1km south of the site (**MLE2994** SK 423 040). A flint scatter is recorded on the highest point of a spur between two rivers (approximately 600m southeast of the proposed development area), which suggests occupation during the Late Mesolithic to the Early Bronze Age. The finds included blades, scrapers and cores (**MLE7566** SK 427 046).

Roman

Mill Field, 100m south of the proposed development area, has also produced evidence for Roman activity (**MLE17118** SK 419 049). During field-walking in the 1980s, one sherd of Roman pottery was recovered. A further 20 sherds were found during field-walking in 2009 and three possible Roman sherds were found during trial trenching on the mill mound later in the year.

In the wider area, a corroded Roman bronze coin, possibly an As, was found in Osbaston approximately 800m south of the proposed development area (**MLE10257** SK 424 043).

Medieval

There is considerable medieval evidence in the locality, however the proposed development site is located outside the medieval villages cores of both Barlestone to the north (**MLE2703** centroid SK 427 057) and Osbaston to the south (**MLE3005** centroid SK 424 044). St. Giles's Church (**MLE2701**), a Grade II listed building, is located approximately 600m north of the site in Barlestone. It has medieval origins and is mentioned in a Matriculus of 1220. The present Parish church was built in 1854/5 using masonry from the earlier medieval chapel; however the chancel is 14th century.

Within the historic settlement core of Barlestone, a body sherd of dark green glazed medieval pottery dating to the 13th-14th centuries was recovered from behind the Three Tuns (**MLE9246**). Ten sherds of coarse medieval pottery and a grey sherd of sandy fabric found during building work south of the Manor House, approximately 200m northeast of the proposed development area (**MLE6783** SK 426 054). The Manor House (**MLE9291** SK 426 055) is located on the southern edge of medieval Barlestone, c.350m north of the proposed development area. It is thought to be one of the manor sites mentioned in Domesday, although the house that now occupies the site was built in 1700, after the destruction of the earlier building. The present building is listed (Grade II- **MLE11700**).

Within the conservation area of Osbaston, southeast of the proposed development area, there is documentary evidence for a medieval chapel, which was abandoned prior to the 18th century (**MLE3004** SK 425 043). An artefact scatter, comprising a medieval coin, harness pendant and spindle whorl, was recovered during metal detecting south of the Rookery in Osbaston (**MLE10256** SK 42363 04211). The HER also records fishponds which were visible north of Osbaston Hall on the early 19th century Surveyor's map and the late 19th century OS 1st edition map (**MLE16600** SK 423 046).

Medieval and post-medieval

One sherd of medieval pottery and seven sherds of post-medieval pottery were recovered from the topsoil during a watching brief at 5, Main Street Osbaston in 2008 (**MLE17113** SK 427 057). During this work, a possible former drainage or property boundary ditch was also observed running alongside the road and a single sherd of 18th century pottery was recovered from the fill (**MLE17114** SK 428 057).

During field-walking in the 1980s 43 sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from the **Mill Field**. Field-walking in 2009 recovered over 100 more sherds of medieval and over 200 sherds of post-medieval pottery, which appeared to form a fairly even spread. Trial trenching on the mill mound in 2009 found a further eight sherds of pottery, all dating from the 12th-14th centuries (**MLE17119** SK 418 049).

Post-medieval/modern

The closest monument of this period is a post-medieval windmill mound, recorded in Mill Field, less than 100m southwest of the proposed development area (**MLE2993** SK 419 050). The mound had been thought to represent a barrow but map evidence, including Prior's map of 1777, depicts a post mill. Trial trenching, undertaken in 2009, recorded 17th century construction layers and produced post-medieval finds including 26 sherds of late 17th-early 19th century pottery. The mound appears to

have been constructed in the last quarter of the 17th century. The cross trees of the mill presumably sat on top of the make-up layers. After the mill was taken down, the recess at the summit was backfilled with garden soil. The latest pottery from the backfill dates to between c.1790- c.1820.

There is documentary evidence for a post-medieval windmill at a location approximately 850m northeast of the proposed development area. Map evidence suggests that this was in use during the 19th century, as it is depicted on 1800s maps, including the early 19th century Surveyor's map but not on 1770 or 1904 (**MLE2700** SK 432 055). 'Roundhouse Corner' is the local name for the corner of Barton and Bosworth Roads (and West End). The site of a roundhouse lockup was shown on an 1841 Estate Map **MLE9492** SK 426 056). A pound was shown on the same 1841 estate map and is also mentioned in 19th century parish records (MLE9493 SK 428 056).

Aims and Objectives

The general aims of the fieldwalking survey were as follows:

- To determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any archaeological remains within the development site
- To provide additional information on the archaeological potential of the site to enable the archaeological implications of the proposed development to be assessed
- To provide additional information on the impact of previous land use on the site
- To produce a site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the Leicestershire HER.

Specific fieldwalking aims were to:-

- Seek to establish whether surface artefact finds correlate with the geophysical anomalies and to attempt to determine if they are of archaeological significance

In addition, the archaeological survey was deemed to have the potential to contribute to the following research aims:

Mesolithic (Myers 2006; Knight et al 2012, English Heritage 2010)

The exploitation of stream side locations during the Mesolithic (Myers 2006).

Neolithic and Early Middle Bronze Age (Clay 2006; Knight et al 2012; English Heritage 2010)

The development of ceremonial monuments and their environs – the area contains several prehistoric Ceremonial landscapes and there may be archaeological assets associated with these present.

Late Iron Age (Willis 2006; Knight et al 2012; English Heritage 2010)

There are Iron Age settlements in the vicinity of the scheme. Artefacts can provide evidence for evidence for craft industry and exchange across broad landscape areas.

The Roman Period (Taylor 2006; Knight et al 2012; English Heritage 2012)

There are several Roman sites in the vicinity of the study area including enclosures. Artefacts may identify potential settlement areas and trade links.

The results of the fieldwalking will contribute towards providing reasoned and informed recommendations to be made to the local planning authority and, if appropriate, a suitable mitigation strategy for the proposed development to be formulated.

This fieldwalking survey conforms to the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012). It has been designed in accordance with current best archaeological practice and the appropriate national standards and guidelines including:

- *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991);
- *Model Briefs and Specifications for Archaeological Assessments and Field Evaluations* (Association of County Archaeological Officers, 1994);
- *Code of Conduct* (Institute for Archaeologists, 2010);
- *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (Institute for Archaeologists, 2010);
- *Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (Leicestershire County Council 1997)

Methodology

Pre-modern artefacts were collected and bagged along 20m transects that had been set up within 100m Ordnance Survey grids (Figures 3 & 4). The location of the finds was plotted using hand held GPS loggers (Garmin Legend Hcx, satellite accuracy c.3-5m). Assuming a field of vision of two metres, a 10% sample of the field's surface was examined.

The visibility during the survey was good with diffused lighting and the majority of the fields walked being under young crop or freshly ploughed. Only two areas proved problematic, with Field 1 under fallow beet with heavy animal compaction, and the eastern area south of Measham Hall under pasture, as a result of which the latter could not be walked.

Results

Numbers of finds from the fieldwalking survey were very low (17 in total) and broad-ranging in date, ranging from earlier prehistoric flint material to medieval pottery (Figure 5).

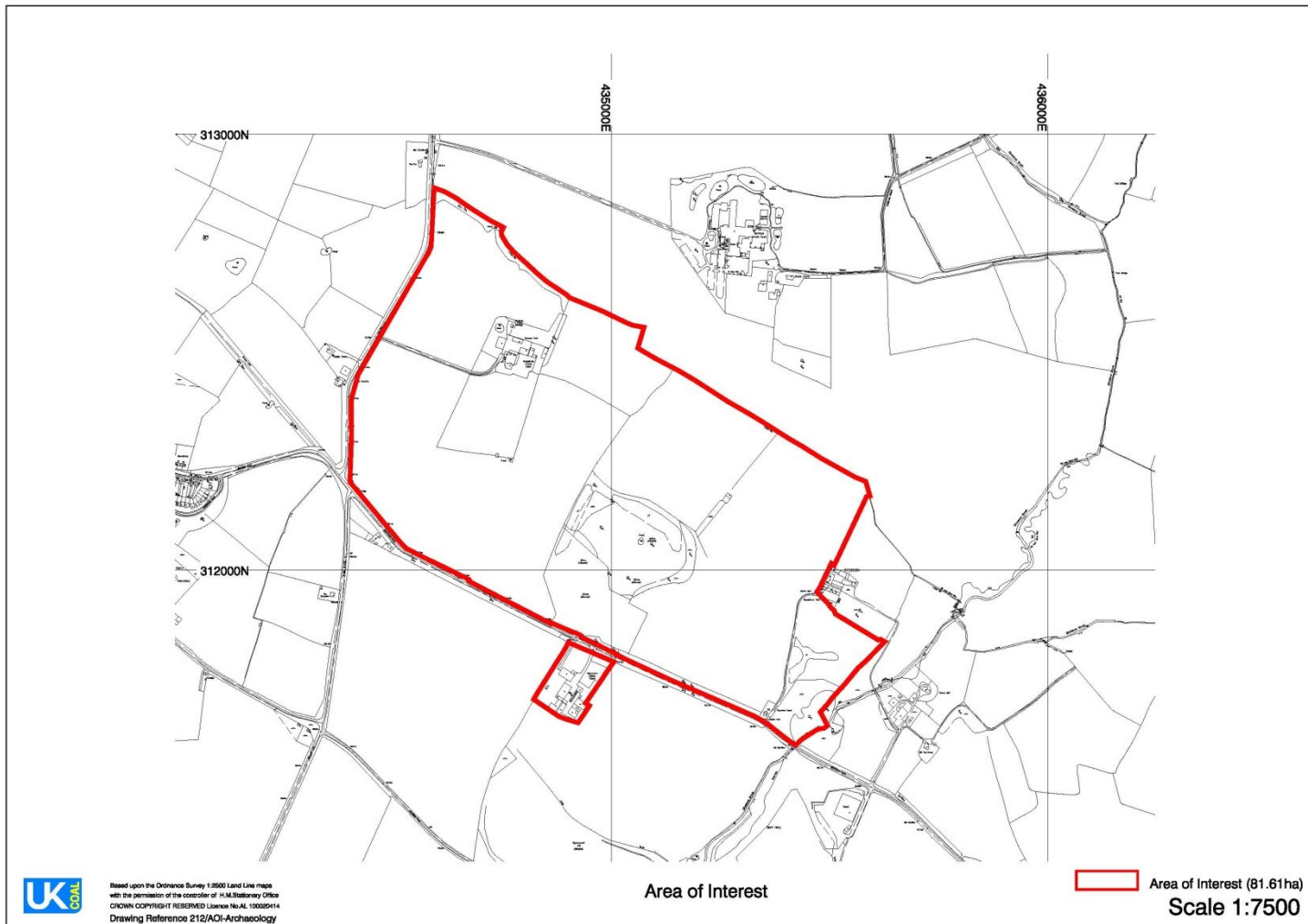


Figure 2: Minorca North, Measham: area of fieldwalking survey

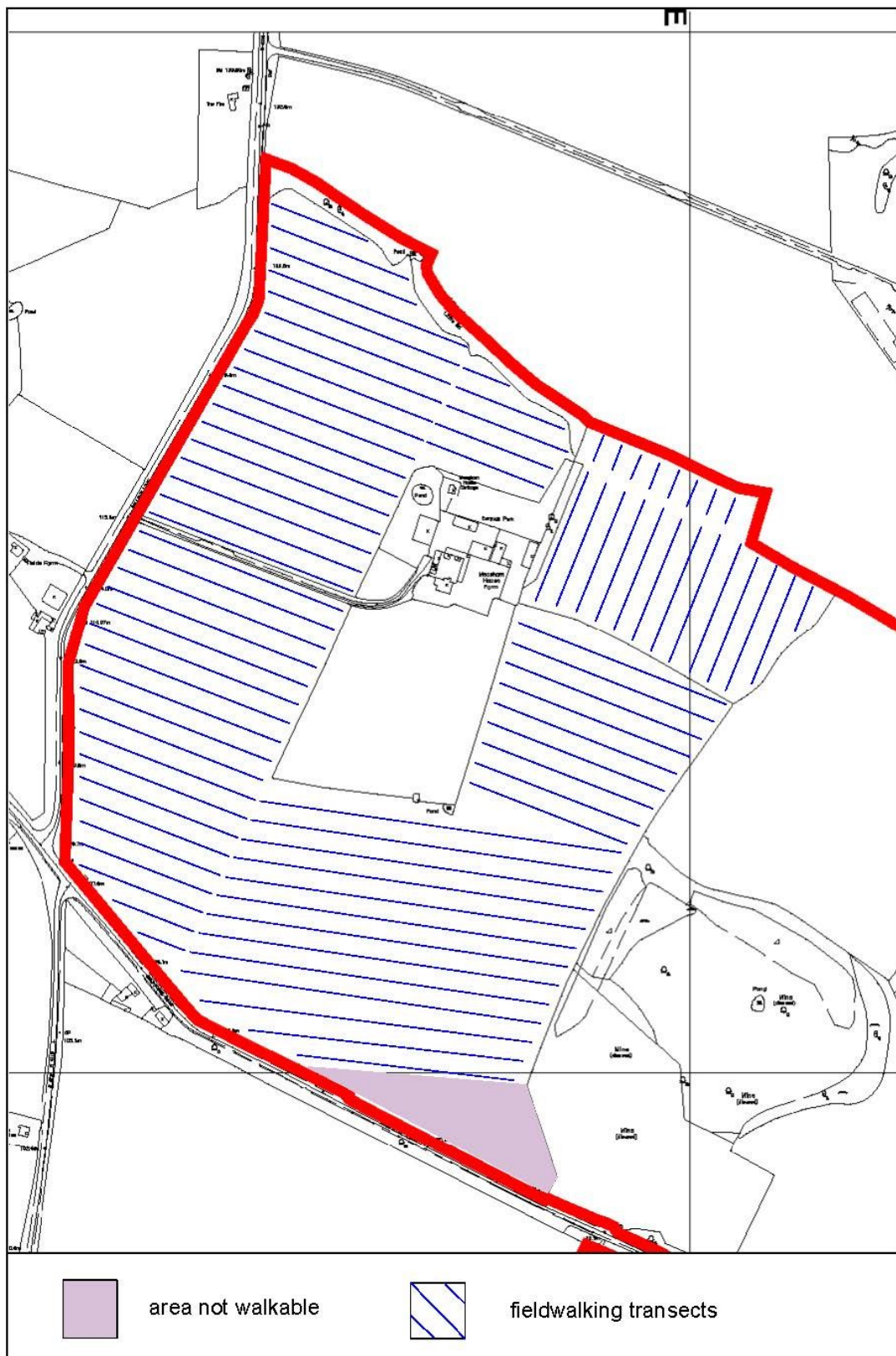


Figure 3: Fieldwalking transects (western area); scale: 1km squares

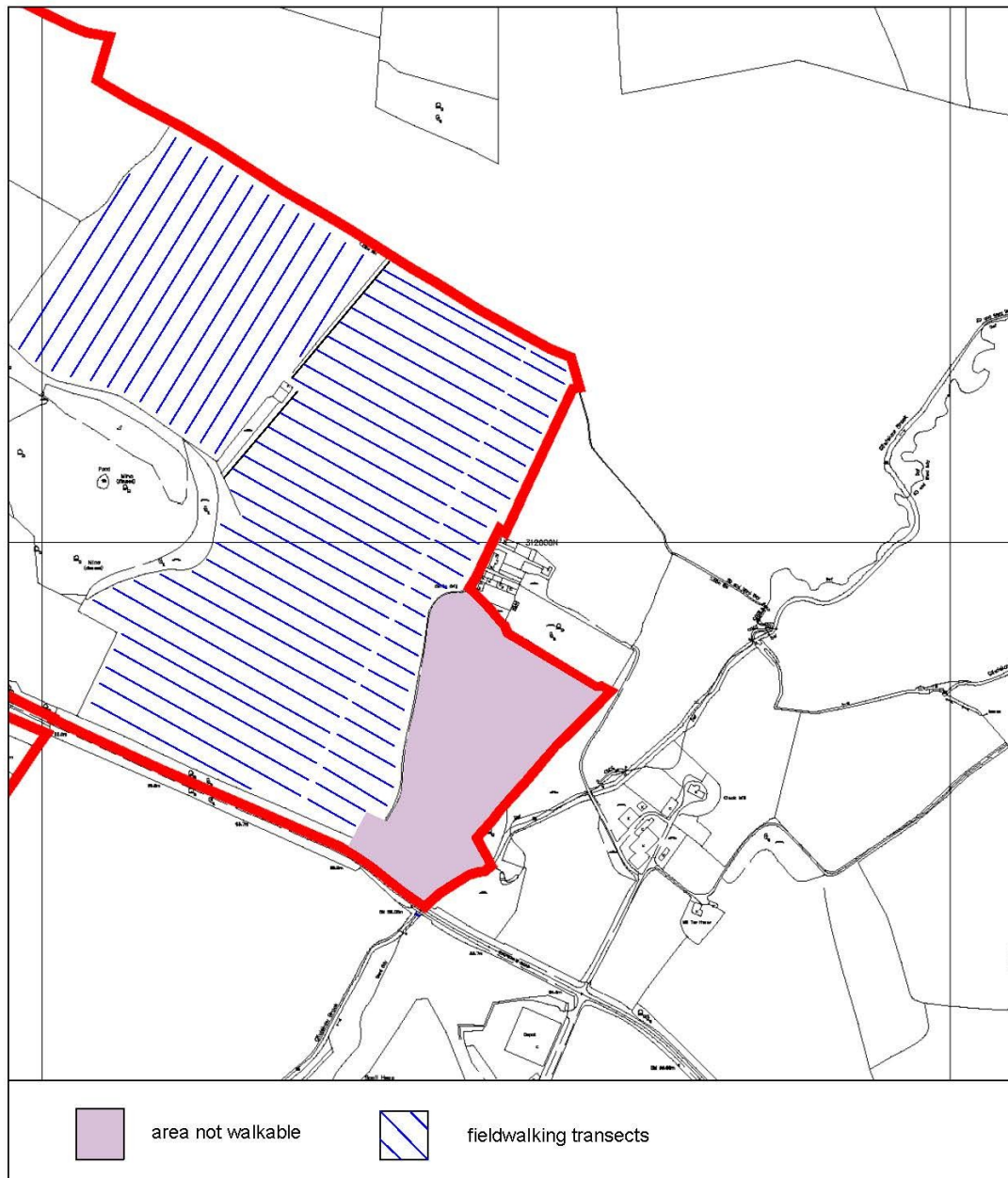


Figure 4: Fieldwalking transects (eastern area); scale: 1km squares

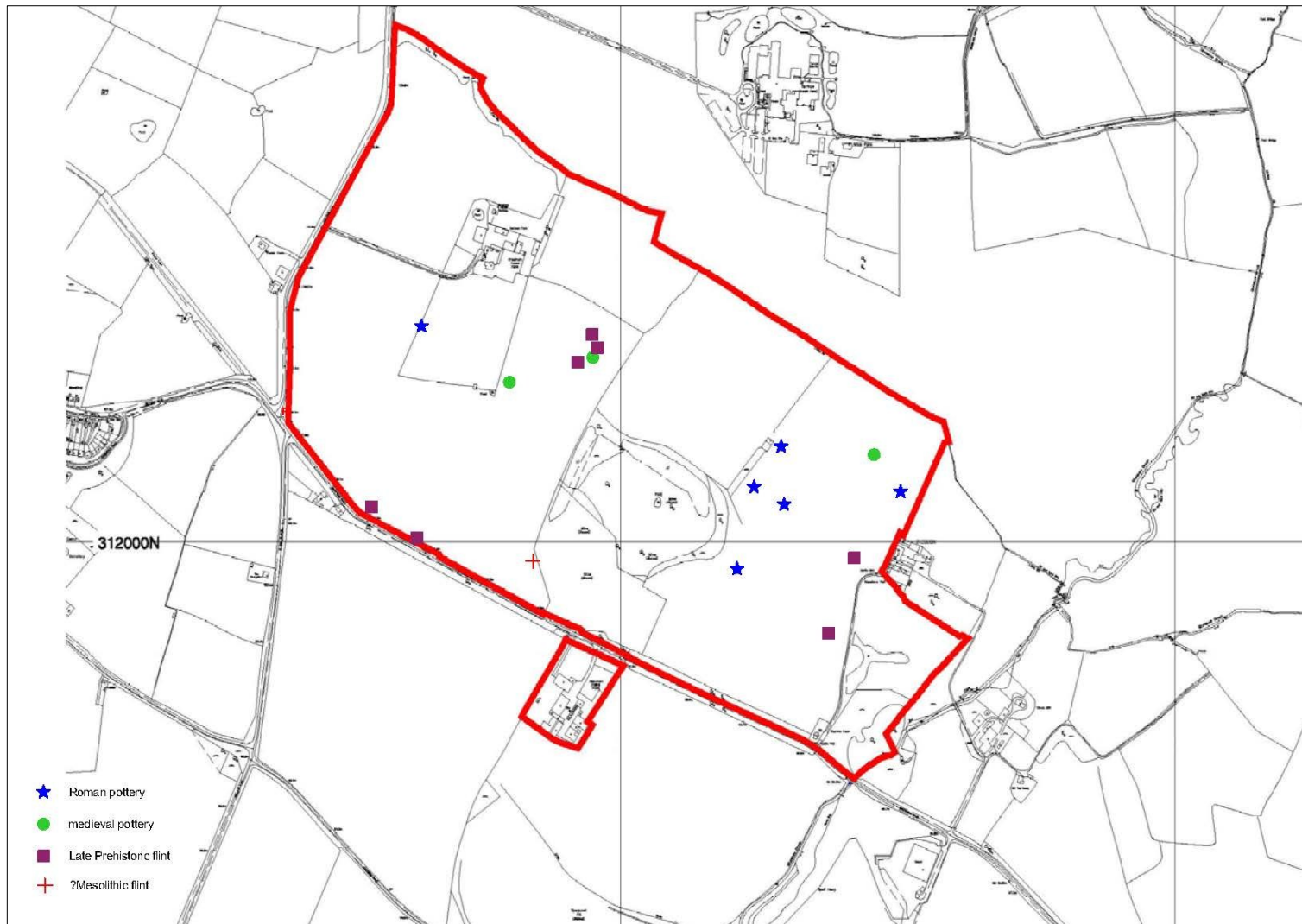


Figure 5: Fieldwalking results



Figure 6: Geophysical survey results showing possible archaeological activity in the eastern area

The recovery of seven Neolithic or Bronze Age flint flakes and tools suggests later prehistoric activity possibly with a single focus around the central northern area. The recovery of a single Mesolithic flint blade hints at earlier activity on or in the vicinity of the site.

The Roman period is represented by six pottery sherds of 2nd to 4th century date, perhaps suggesting the presence of a site to the east of the site of the former coal mine. Medieval material is poorly represented by three dispersed pottery sherds, suggesting background activity.

Discussion and Conclusions

The fieldwalking results, principally the recovery of Roman ceramic material from the eastern survey area, appears to correlate with the 2012 geophysical survey (Smalley 2012), which provided evidence for possible ditched enclosures in the form of positive linear, curvilinear and rectilinear anomalies (Figure 6).

Whilst the geophysical survey provided clear evidence for medieval ridge and furrow cultivation across much of the remainder of the site, fieldwalking produced little in the way of archaeological material. Whilst this may in part be explained by poor ground conditions in certain areas, it is likely largely due to an absence of archaeological sites on the site, with those few finds recovered largely representing background 'noise'.

Archive and Publications

The site archive (X.A111.2012), consisting of paper and photographic records, will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council Museums Service.

The paper archive consists of:

- Trench records sheets
- Photographic record indices
- 11 digital photographs
- Monochrome photographs
- A risk assessment form

Publication

A version of the excavation summary (see above) will appear in due course in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*.

Acknowledgements

Roger Kipling and Steven Baker of ULAS undertook the archaeological evaluation on behalf of UK Coal Ltd. The project was managed by Patrick Clay.

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Appendix: The Finds *Nick Cooper, Deborah Sawday and Lynden Cooper*

The finds are listed below by find number (Table 1).

The Flint

Lynden Cooper

The majority of the flint, consisting of four secondary flakes, a piercer and a calcined core fragment, are characteristic locally-produced late prehistoric find types, namely of Neolithic or Bronze Age date. The blade fragment is likely or earlier, possibly Mesolithic, date.

The Pottery

Nick Cooper and Deborah Sawday

The pottery, nine sherds, weighing 85 grams, was catalogued with reference to the guidelines set out by the Medieval Pottery Research Group (MPRG, 2001) and the ULAS Roman and Medieval pottery fabric series (Connor and Buckley 1999). The six fragments of Roman pottery, dated from the 2nd to the 4th century, and the medieval material from the 13th to the mid-16th century. All of the pottery, save the Samian, is typically, local in origin.

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Table 1: The flint and the pottery.

Find No.	Material	Nos	Grams
1	Roman Pot – DW – Derbyshire ware – late 2 nd – 4 th C. AD.	1	9
2	Flint – blade fragment, patinated	1	
3	Medieval Pot – MP1 - Midland Purple 1 - c.1375-1550 AD.	1	7
4	Flint – secondary flake	1	
5	Flint – secondary flake	1	
6	Roman Pot – DW – Derbyshire ware – late 2 nd – 4 th C. AD.	1	14
7	Stone (discarded)	1	
8	Roman Pot – SAM – Samian - ?central Gaulish – 2 nd C. AD.	1	5
9	Roman Pot – DW – Derbyshire ware? – late 2 nd – 4 th C. AD.	1	5
10	Roman Pot – C2 – Nene Valley Colour Coat – 4 th C. AD.	1	8
11	Roman Pot – C3 – Colour Coat – late 2 nd – 3 rd C. AD.	1	6
12	Medieval Pot – MP1 - Midland Purple 1 - c.1375-1550 AD.	1	9

51	Flint – core, opposed platform – Wolds flint.	1	
52	Medieval Pot – MS - Medieval Sandy ware - ?Derbyshire Pink Sandy ware – 13 th -14 th C. AD.	1	22
53	Flint – secondary flake	1	
54	Flint - piercer	1	
55	Flint – secondary flake	1	
56	Flint – core, calcined	1	

Oasis Information

Project Name	Minorca North
Project Type	Archaeological fieldwalking
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Roger Kipling
Previous/Future work	desk-based assessment
Current Land Use	Agricultural
Development Type	open-cast coal
Reason for Investigation	NPPF
Position in the Planning Process	Pre-determination
Site Co ordinates	NGR SK 305 122
Start/end dates of field work	April 2013
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council
Study Area	c.137 ha

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