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Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Fieldwalking Survey
on land to the north of Longslade Community College,
Birstall, Leicestershire**



NGR: SK 59291 10458

Gavin Speed

ULAS Report No 2009-154.

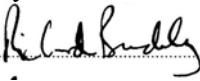

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NGR: SK 59291 10458

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For: Leicestershire County Council

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CONTENTS

Summary	3
Introduction.....	3
Site Description, Topography and Geology.....	3
Archaeological Background.....	5
Aims and Methods	5
Results.....	8
Conclusions.....	10
Archive.....	11
Bibliography	12
Appendix 1: The Pottery	14
Appendix 2: The Worked Flint.....	16
Appendix 3: Catalogue of all finds	17

FIGURES

Figure 1: Site location plan. 1:20 000.....	4
Figure 2: Direction of fieldwalking traverses and southern field area not fieldwalked.	6
Figure 3: Northern end of field, looking southeast.....	7
Figure 4: Southern end of field with crop, looking southwest.....	7
Figure 5: Distribution of worked flint.....	9
Figure 6: Distribution of pottery finds	10

An Archaeological Fieldwalking Survey on Land to the North of Longslade Community College, Birstall, Leicestershire

Summary

An archaeological fieldwalking survey was carried out by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on land to the north of Longslade School, Birstall, Leicestershire, on behalf of Leicestershire County Council. The fieldwalking survey revealed a medium density scatter of worked flint within the north-east corner of the field, this contained a high proportion of tools within the assemblage. In addition to this a low level of late medieval and post-medieval pottery was identified across the entire survey area.

The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Heritage Services Section, accession no. XA.201.2009.

Introduction

This report presents the results of an archaeological fieldwalking survey carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on land to the north of the sports ground of Longslade School, Birstall, Leicestershire (SK 59291 10458). The work was undertaken as part of an archaeological impact assessment in advance of proposed development of the site as a Park and Ride (Speed 2009b). The fieldwalking survey was limited to the northern area of the field, as crops prevented survey in the southern half of the field (see fig. 2).

Site Description, Topography and Geology

The site is located 6.5km north of Leicester city centre, to the north of the sports ground of Longslade School, Birstall, in the Borough of Charnwood. The application area is c.8 ha, it is bounded by the A6 to the west, the A46 to the north, Ice House Spinney to the east, and Longslade School to the south (see fig.1).

The central area lies on a crest of a hill at *c.*75m O.D. The southern half of the field slopes sharply to the south to around 65m O.D. Within the southern area of the field stood oilseed rape crop, reducing the area to fieldwalk to just over 50% of the development site (see fig. 2).

The fieldwork was necessary to fulfil the conditions required by the Senior Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council. The underlying geology of the site consists of boulder clay, overlain by sand and gravel, river gravel, and Mercia Mudstone (British Geological Survey map sheet 156).

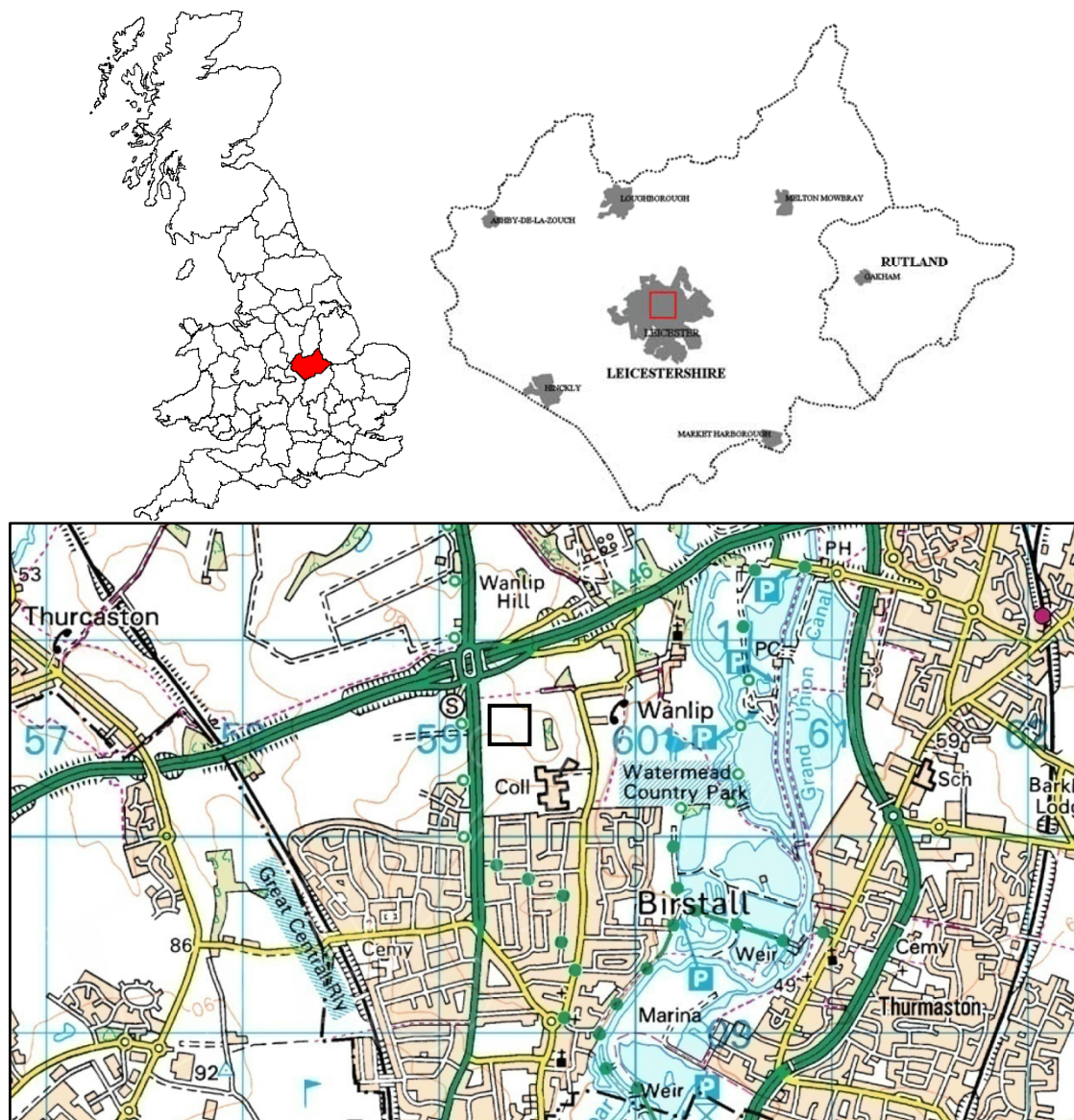


Figure 1: Site location plan. 1:20 000.

Adapted from plan supplied by client. By permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100021186

Archaeological Background

The Historic Environment Records (HERs) for Leicester and Leicestershire and Rutland shows that there are known archaeological sites close to the application area. Immediately to the west side of the A6 is an Iron Age settlement of Hallam Fields (Speed 2009a). Immediately on the south and east side of the development site is an Anglo-Saxon inhumation cemetery. Finds included pottery, brooches, swords, shield bosses and spearheads. This was discovered in archaeological excavations in 1958-60 prior to the construction of Longslade School (Liddle 1980). Fieldwalking in adjacent fields in 1982 located further Anglo-Saxon material, along with Neolithic flint scatters (Grimley 2000:133). Elsewhere within the surrounding area are numerous prehistoric, Roman, and medieval finds and sites (Grimley et al 2000). The field was subject to a geophysical survey prior to the fieldwalking, possible archaeological features consisting of several linear features, a possible roundhouse, and other isolated features were identified within the field (Walford 2009:1).

Aims and Methods

The overall aim of the fieldwalking survey was to gather some information to establish the extent, condition, character and date (as far as circumstances permit) of any archaeological features and deposits within the area to target for further archaeological evaluation. The fieldwalking survey was undertaken in the northern half of the field as crop was still present in the southern half (see fig. 2 and 4). Pre-modern artefacts were collected and bagged along 20m transects. The location of the finds were plotted using hand held GPS loggers.

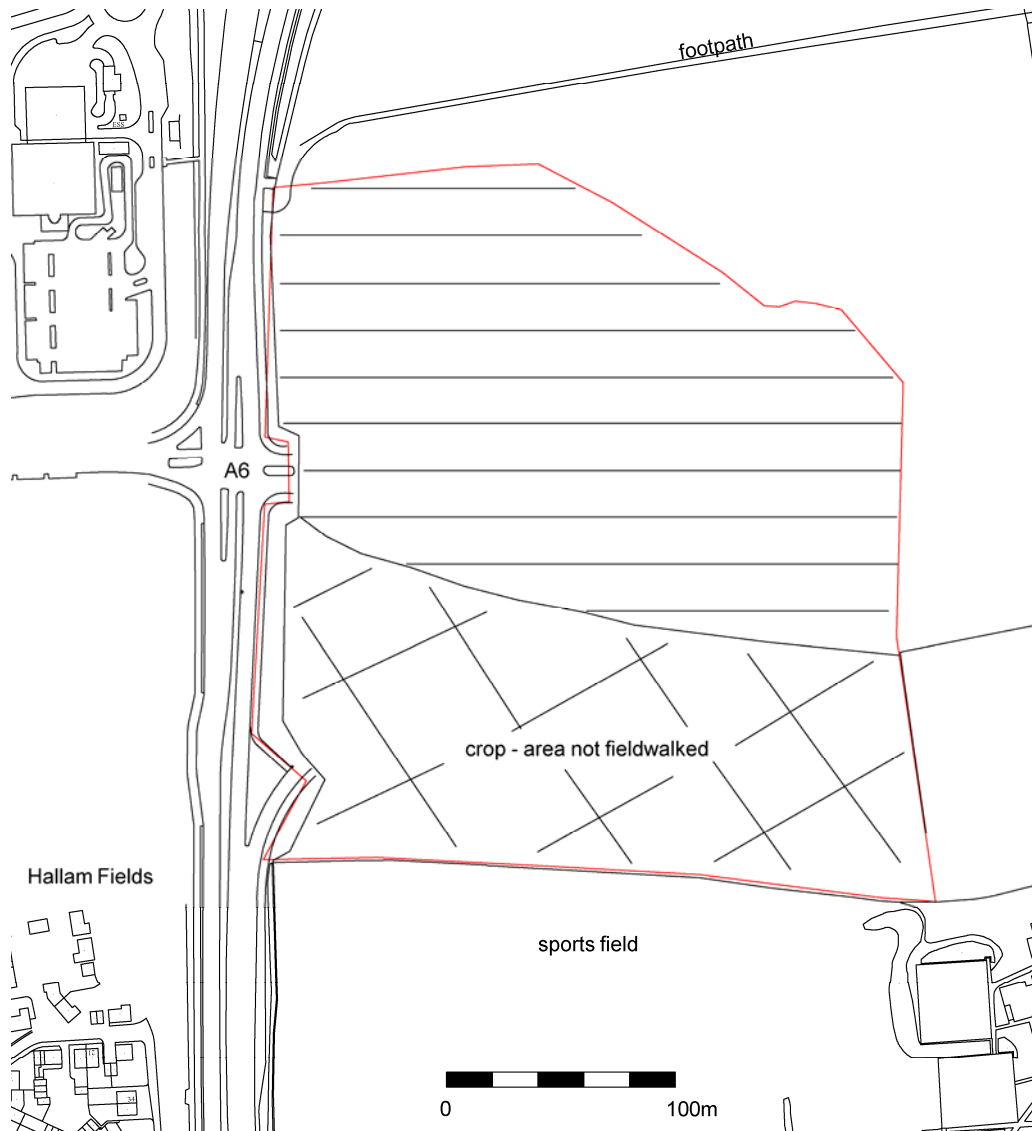


Figure 2: Direction of fieldwalking traverses and southern area not fieldwalked



Figure 3: Northern end of field, looking southeast



Figure 4: Southern end of field with crop, looking southwest

Results

A total of 61 finds were recorded, consisting of 28 worked flint finds, 28 sherds of pottery, one coarse building material, and 4 miscellaneous objects (natural flint). The flint and pottery were examined by Lynden Cooper and Deborah Sawday, respectively, and their identifications can be found in Appendix 1 and 2. A full list of finds is available in Appendix 3. Plots of the finds are shown below in figures 5 and 6. The fieldwalking survey was limited to the northern area of the field, as crops prevented survey in the southern half of the field (see fig. 2 and 4).

Prehistoric

28 pieces of worked flint (50% of all material collected) was recovered from the fieldwalking survey. Some items (an arrowhead and discoidal scraper) are Late Neolithic, some of the scrapers are later Bronze Age in date. The high proportion of tools (50%) suggests a later Bronze Age date. There is a concentration of worked flint in the north-west area of the field (see fig.5).

Roman

A single fragment of brick or tile – possibly Roman – was recovered from the fieldwalking survey (location shown on figure 6). This may indicate Roman activity in the area.

Medieval

Two sherds of late medieval Cistercian / Midland Blackware were recovered from the survey (see fig.6). These were both located at the north-end of the field, it is likely these relate to phases of activity associated with medieval settlement in the area.

Post-medieval - modern

The majority of the pottery finds recovered (93%) were post-medieval pottery sherds. These ranged from early earthenware (17th century), to later 19th century examples (see fig.6). Modern brick, tile, and pottery were observed – but not collected – during

the survey. All post-medieval / modern finds were found as a general low level scatter spread across the entire area, and are likely present because of manuring practices.

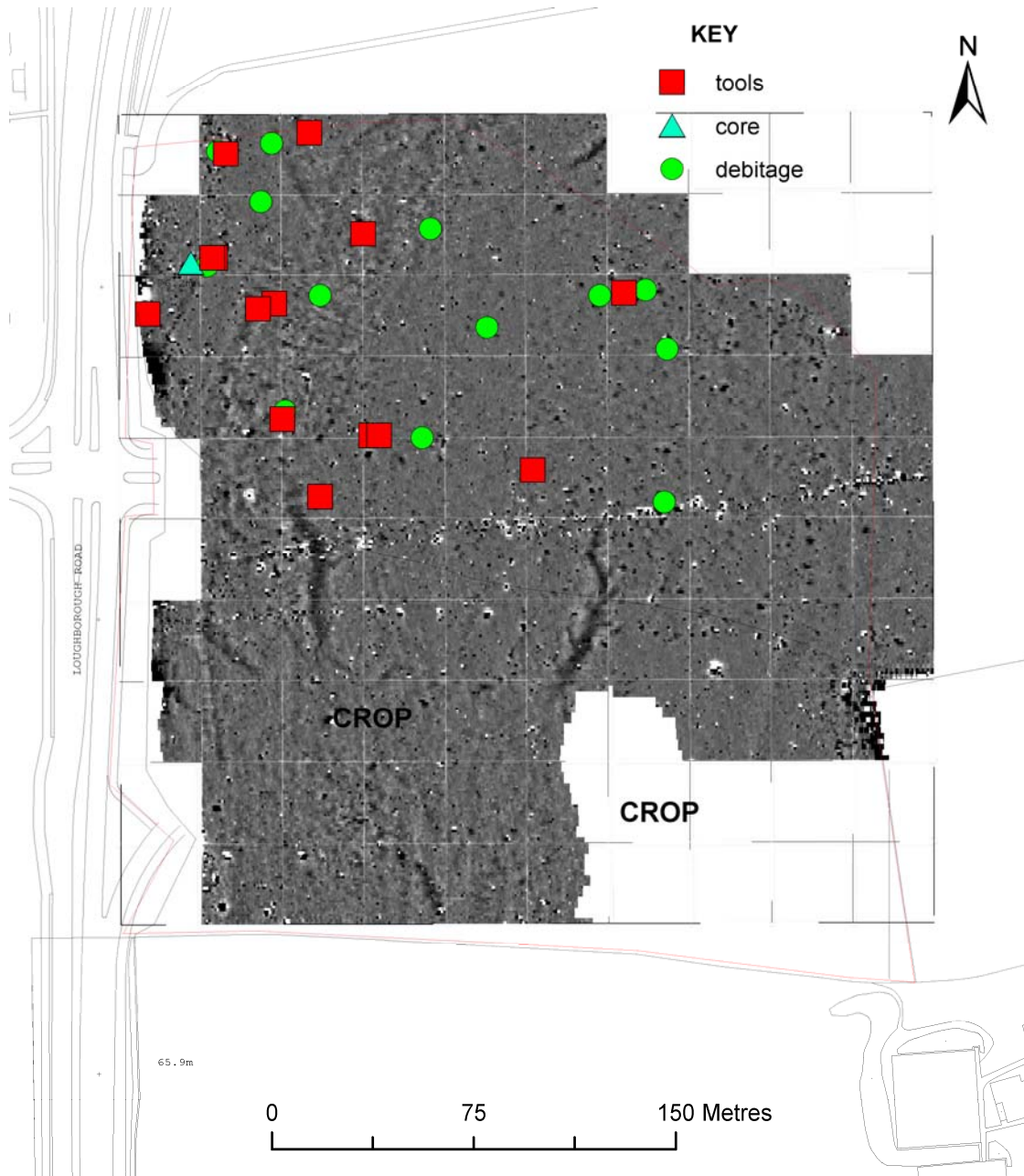


Figure 5: Distribution of worked flint



Figure 6: Distribution of pottery finds

Conclusions

The fieldwalking survey has revealed evidence for a medium scatter of worked flint in the north-west area of the field. The assemblage contained a high number of tools within a fairly small area and indicates probable prehistoric activity within this area. The geophysical survey also revealed evidence for possible prehistoric features within this area (Walford 2009:3). A single fragment of Roman tile may indicate Roman settlement evidence. Later evidence of Anglo-Saxon or medieval date are absent, though this does not imply that archaeology from these periods are not present below

the plough soil. The southern half of the field could not be surveyed due to high level of crop cover.

Archive

Fieldwork was carried out by Gavin Speed and Jon Coward. The pottery was identified by Deborah Sawday. The flint was identified by Lynden Cooper. Richard Buckley managed the project.

The archive will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services, and is an addition to the current archive under accession number XA.201.2009.

The archive contains:

- Survey notes and plans
- Digital photos on CD
- 1 box of finds
- CD containing this report
- Unbound copy of this report

The report is listed on the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York under ID: universi1-66961. Available at: <http://oasis.ac.uk/>

ID	OASIS entry summary for universi1-66961
Project Name	Birstall Park and Ride
Summary	An archaeological fieldwalking survey was carried out by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on land to the north of Longslade School, Birstall, Leicestershire, on behalf of Leicestershire County Council. The fieldwalking survey revealed a medium density scatter of worked flint within the north-east corner of the field, this contained a high proportion of tools within the assemblage. In addition to this a low level of late medieval and post-medieval pottery was identified across the entire survey area.
Project Type	Fieldwalking
Project Manager	Richard Buckley
Project Supervisor	Gavin Speed
Previous/Future work	Previous: none. / Future: likely.
Current Land Use (2009)	Agricultural farmland

Development Type	Commercial
Reason for Investigation	PPG16
Position in the Planning Process	as a condition
Site Co ordinates	SK 59291 10458
Start/end dates of field work	26/10/2009
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services
Study Area	8ha
Associated project reference codes	Museum accession ID: XA.201.2009 OASIS form ID: universi1-66961

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Appendix 1: The Pottery

By Deborah Sawday

The pottery, 28 sherds, weighing 366 grams, was catalogued with reference to the ULAS fabrics Series (Sawday 1989), (Davies and Sawday 1999). The results are shown below (Table 1).

Most of this material was evidently the result of the manuring of the fields in the post medieval or modern periods. Only two sherds in Cistercian/Midland Blackware probably relate to earlier phases of activity associated with the medieval settlement.

Table 1: The medieval and later pottery by fabric, sherd numbers and weight (grams).

Fabric	Common Name	Sherds	Weight
Late Medieval/Early Post Medieval			
CW2/MB	Cistercian ware 2/Midland Black ware	2	2
Early Post Medieval			
EA1	Earthenware 1	1	12
Post Medieval			
EA6	Earthenware 6	2	177
Post Medieval/Modern			
EA1/2	Earthenware 1/2	1	4
EA2	Earthenware 2	22	171
Totals		28	366

Bibliography

Connor, A., and Buckley, R., 1999 *Roman and Medieval Occupation in Causeway Lane, Leicester*, Leicester Archaeology Mon. 5.

Davies, S., and Sawday, D., 1999 'The Post Roman Pottery and Tile' in A. Connor and R. Buckley, 1999, 165-213.

Sawday, D., 1989 'The post Roman pottery', 28-41 in J.N. Lucas, 'An excavation in the north east quarter of Leicester: Elbow Lane, 1977', *Trans. Leicestershire Archaeol. and Hist. Soc.* 63, 18-47.

Context	Fabric/Ware	No s	Grams	Comments
POT				
SF11	EA2 - Earthenware 2	1	5	Post med/modern
SF13	EA2	1	6	Post med/modern
SF16	EA2	1	15	Post med/modern
SF17	EA2	1	2	Post med/modern
SF19	EA1/2 – Earthenware 1/2	1	4	Post med/modern – partially reduced, thin walled, possibly early post med
SF22	EA2	1	8	Post med/modern
SF23	EA2	1	1	Post med/modern pos. early, thin walled etc.
SF30	EA2	1	10	Post med/modern
SF35	EA2	1	6	Post med/modern
SF36	EA2	1	19	Post med/modern
SF37	EA2	1	8	Post med/modern
SF43	EA2	1	4	Post med/modern
SF45	EA2	1	9	Post med/modern
SF49	EA2	1	6	Post med/modern
SF50	EA2	1	6	Post med/modern
SF52	EA6 – Black ware	1	6	Post med
SF53	EA6	1	171	Post med, c.1650-1750, base, black glazed internally
SF54	EA2	1	2	Post med – hollow ware,

				thin walled/partially reduced
SF56	EA2	1	2	Post med/modern
SF59	CW2/MB – Cistercian ware2/Midland Black ware	1	1	Late medieval/early post medieval, c.1450-1650, purple/black glaze internally & externally
SF61	EA2	1	10	Post med/modern
SF63	EA2	1	5	Post med/modern
SF64	CW2/MB	1	1	Late medieval/early post medieval, c.1450-1650, glaze internally & ext, abraded
SF66	EA2	1	7	Post med/modern
SF69	EA2	1	7	Post med/modern, pos post med – red bodied
SF71	EA2	1	10	Post med/- hollow ware,
SF72	EA2	1	23	Post med/modern
SF73	EA1 – Earthenware 1	1	12	Early post med – reduced, semi vitrified, hollow ware
MISC.				
SF10	EA - Earthenware	1	14	Brick/tile - period unknown, possibly Roman
SF24	Coal	1	11	

Appendix 2: The Worked Flint

By Lynden Cooper

The flint collection has typo-technological indications of a late prehistoric date. The arrowhead (SF67) and discoidal scraper with prepared base are Late Neolithic pieces. The scrapers with straight-edged retouch, a horned scraper and the spurred pieces are likely to represent later Bronze Age activity. There is a high proportion of tools in the collection that may in part reflect collection bias, but could also be due to its later Bronze Age date.

SF	worked flint	flint type
1	spurred flake	debitage
2	natural	natural
3	piercer	tool
4	concave scraper	tool
5	piercer	tool
12	shatter	debitage
14	horned scraper	tool
15	scraper (straight edge retouch)	tool
18	core	core
21	flake	debitage
25	shatter	debitage
26	natural	natural
32	scraper (straight edge retouch)	tool
38	scraper (straight edge retouch)	tool
39	flake	debitage
40	natural	natural
41	retouched flake (?piercer)	tool
42	bladelet (not true technology)	tool
44	retouched flake	debitage
46	flake	debitage
47	shatter	debitage
51	retouched flake (piercer?)	tool
55	discoidal (with prepared base)	tool
57	retouched flake	debitage
58	scraper (round and straight edge retouch)	tool
60	notched flake	debitage
62	piercer	tool
65	retouched flake	debitage
67	arrowhead frag (British oblique?)	tool
68	utilised flake	debitage
70	spurred flake	debitage

Appendix 3: Catalogue of all finds

SF	E	N	Find	notes
1	459301	310538	worked flint	spurred flake
2	459290	310536	natural	natural
3	459282	310539	worked flint	piercer
4	459285	310539	worked flint	concave scraper
5	459249	310545	worked flint	piercer
10	459349	310607	Brick / tile	Roman? Brick / tile
11	459345	310605	pottery	Post-med /modern
12	459250	310548	worked flint	shatter
13	459268	310592	pottery	Post-med /modern
14	459199	310584	worked flint	horned scraper
15	459246	310588	worked flint	scraper (straight edge retouch)
16	459267	310591	pottery	Post-med /modern
17	459396	310533	pottery	Post-med /modern
18	459215	310603	worked flint	core
19	459420	310540	pottery	Post-med /modern
21	459263	310591	worked flint	flake
22	459288	310635	pottery	Post-med /modern
23	459213	310621	pottery	Post-med /modern
24	459217	310619	coal	coal
25	459241	310626	worked flint	shatter
26	459321	310641	natural	natural
30	459459	310545	pottery	Post-med /modern
32	459279	310614	worked flint	scraper (straight edge retouch)
35	459461	310504	pottery	Post-med /modern
36	459422	310497	pottery	Post-med /modern
37	459422	310496	pottery	Post-med /modern
38	459342	310526	worked flint	scraper (straight edge retouch)
39	459221	310602	worked flint	flake
40	459223	310605	natural	natural
41	459223	310605	worked flint	retouched flake (?piercer)
42	459224	310605	worked flint	bladelet (not true technology)
43	459310	310578	pottery	Post-med /modern
44	459304	310616	worked flint	retouched flake
45	459349	310586	pottery	Post-med /modern
46	459325	310579	worked flint	flake
47	459392	310571	worked flint	shatter
49	459431	310579	pottery	Post-med /modern
50	459330	310515	pottery	Post-med /modern
51	459263	310516	worked flint	retouched flake (piercer?)
52	459325	310550	pottery	Post-med /modern
53	459337	310602	pottery	Post-med /modern
54	459324	310602	pottery	Post-med /modern
55	459240	310586	worked flint	discoidal (with prepared base)
56	459221	310643	pottery	Post-med /modern
57	459225	310645	worked flint	retouched flake
58	459228	310644	worked flint	scraper (round and straight edge)

				retouch)
59	459237	310647	pottery	Cistercian
60	459245	310648	worked flint	notched flake
61	459255	310649	pottery	Post-med /modern
62	459259	310652	worked flint	piercer
63	459259	310652	pottery	Post-med /modern
64	459314	310660	pottery	Cistercian
65	459367	310591	worked flint	retouched flake
66	459367	310591	pottery	Post-med /modern
67	459376	310592	worked flint	arrowhead fragment (British oblique?)
68	459384	310593	worked flint	utilised flake
69	459385	310593	pottery	Post-med /modern
70	459391	310514	worked flint	spurred flake
71	459451	310526	pottery	Post-med /modern
72	459463	310483	pottery	Post-med /modern
73	459447	310482	pottery	Post-med /modern

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