



# Land off Harthill Road Thorpe Salvin, South Yorkshire

Fieldwalking Training Project



Ref: THS16  
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## Document Information

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County	South Yorkshire
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WA project code	THS16
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Project management by	Andrew Norton
Document compiled by	Andy Swann
Contributions from	Alvaro Mora-Ottomano (flint)
Graphics by	Ian Atkins

## Quality Assurance

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## Summary

In November 2016, staff from Wessex Archaeology undertook fieldwalking training on agricultural land to the west of Thorpe Salvin, South Yorkshire, to which the landowner had generously provided access. Approximately 12 hectares of a single field were fieldwalked over a three-day period. All located finds were of post-medieval or modern date and were subsequently discarded. The single exception was a small plano-convex flint knife of probable Early Bronze Age date. Such objects are often recovered from burials or other ceremonial deposits. This single find may therefore be indicative of ritual or votive activity within the vicinity, although no associated finds or monuments are recorded nearby.

## Acknowledgements

The fieldwalking exercise was undertaken under the direction of Jonathan Buttery and Patrick Daniel, who were assisted by Owen Batchelor, Simon Brown, Callum Bruce, Hannah Dabill, Justyna Dekiert, Emily Eastwood, Stavroula Fouriki, Michael Howarth, Gwen Naylor, Dora Olah, Ciaran O'Neill, Heather Tamminen and Lluís Bermudo-Ferrer.

This report has been written by Andy Swann and edited by Patrick Daniel. The flint report was produced by Alvaro Mora-Ottomano. The project was managed by Andrew Norton.



# Land off Harthill Road, Thorpe Salvin, South Yorkshire

## Fieldwalking Training Project

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 As part of a constantly developing program of in-house training, a field at Thorpe Salvin was selected to enable members of Wessex Archaeology staff to gain experience of archaeological fieldwalking.
- 1.1.2 The selected field was known to have produced a selection of post-medieval and modern finds together with occasional flint waste (I Machin, pers. comm.).
- 1.1.3 Approximately 12 hectares of a single field were fieldwalked over a three-day period.
- 1.1.4 Whilst no documentary research or map regression was undertaken it was understood that the proximity of the site to the village of Thorpe Salvin, with its impressive 12th-century Parish church dedicated to Saint Peter, would have led to the disposal of nightsoil onto the local fields in the past.

#### 1.2 The site

- 1.2.1 The surveyed field is located 1 km to the west of Thorpe Salvin. It lies directly to the north and east of Harthill Road and Packman Lane respectively. It is bordered to the north by further fields and to the east by the village of Thorpe Salvin (NGR 451080, 381550).
- 1.2.2 The surveyed field occupies a slight south-facing slope (Pl. 4), descending from 128 m OD at its northern boundary to 119 m OD adjacent to Harthill Road.
- 1.2.3 The underlying geology is mapped as Dolostone of the Cadeby Formation, with sparse and patchy superficial deposits of Diamicton Till (British Geological Survey online viewer).
- 1.2.4 The fieldwalking occurred between 14th and 18th November 2016. At this time the westernmost part of the field had recently been subject to conservation tillage, although to the east, straw and stubble covered much of the ground, leading to the eventual abandonment of the fieldwalking due to lack of visibility. Weather was dry for the time of year and the field was not too muddy, presenting good conditions with regard to access, and reasonable ground visibility overall.

### 2 METHODOLOGY

#### 2.1 Aims and objectives

- 2.1.1 The primary aim of the project was to provide training for a number of Wessex Archaeology staff. This would enable them to gain experience of fieldwalking together with recognising, locating and processing finds.



2.1.2 The fieldwalking was also undertaken to produce a piece of work that could add to the knowledge of the area, with the results deposited in the South Yorkshire Sites and Monuments Record.

## 2.2 Method

2.2.1 The area was subdivided into 10 m-wide north–south aligned lanes. The westernmost of these lay parallel with and adjacent to the western field boundary, the easternmost lay some 400 m to the east.

2.2.2 Each lane was walked by a trainee fieldwalker, with the team as a whole working under the instruction of a more experienced member of staff. Recovered finds were bagged, numbered and collected.

2.2.3 Standard Wessex Archaeology *pro forma* recording sheets were used to record relevant surface conditions and topography.

## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 General

3.1.1 An excess of 100 finds was recorded over the target field. The vast majority of the finds were of post-medieval and modern date and after washing and rapid analysis were discarded (eg, Pl. 1–2). The single exception was a plano-convex flint knife (see below).

### 3.2 The flint knife

3.2.1 A single lithic artefact was retrieved from the fieldwalking training (Pl. 5).

3.2.2 The lithic consists of a plano-convex flint knife which typically date to the Early Bronze Age (Butler 2005, 170). The artefact is complete (47 mm long x 23 mm wide x 6 mm thick, 8 grams) and is sub-rectangular in form with a shallow 'D'-shaped cross section. It has a thin whiteish patina throughout although the ventral face contains a post-depositional spalling damage revealing that the flint is a semi-translucent mid-brown colour of good quality. The butt retains a small cortex coverage of orangey colour. The knife has rounded edges and has been worked on the dorsal face with invasive, low angle, retouch.

3.2.3 This raw material does not occur naturally in this area. The location of the sources may lie in the gravels of Doncaster and/or Humberside (Gaunt and Girling 1996, 191; McEvoy *et al.* 2005).

## 4 DISCUSSION

4.1.1 The vast majority of the finds were of post-medieval and modern date, representing commonly encountered types of artefact such as pottery, brick and tile and clay tobacco pipe fragments. These are presumed to have made their way on to the land through the spreading of nightsoil and other domestic waste onto the fields in the past, likely originating from Thorpe Salvin, the closest settlement.

4.1.2 The only find of significance was the plano-convex flint knife. This finely wrought item would have been a prestige object in its time, and such objects are often found within burials or other ceremonial deposits (Edmonds 1995, 97).



- 4.1.3 The Heritage Gateway ([heritagegateway.org.uk](http://heritagegateway.org.uk) accessed 20/12/2018) records no obviously associated sites or finds in the vicinity. Within 1 km of the findspot the only results of slight relevance are Mesolithic flint artefacts from Snape Close, Anston (HER No. 0074/01) and a possible rock shelter in Smarson Hill Wood (HER No. 00427/01). According to one local resident and employee of Wessex Archaeology, there is anecdotal evidence of flints having been seen or collected from the field in the past (I. Machin pers. comm.).
- 4.1.4 Thorpe Salvin lies on the geological formation known as the Magnesian Limestone, a north–south belt of relatively well-drained and light soils, which is thought to have been particularly attractive for settlement and agriculture in the past (Roberts *et al.* 2010). Evidence for settlement for the Mesolithic–Bronze Age is sparse, although the distribution of prehistoric findspots suggests extensive exploitation throughout the area. From current understanding, ritual monuments, especially round barrows, appear to have been confined to the higher ground of the Magnesian Limestone (*op. cit.*, 42). Situated at 125 m OD on the south slope of a local high-point, the present site occupies such terrain. The presence of the flint knife may indicate an Early Bronze Age barrow or other ritual site on or in the near vicinity. The topographic setting of the surveyed field, when set against the current understanding of the distribution of such sites, offers some support for the notion of a hitherto unknown Bronze Age funerary/ritual site at this location.

## 5 ARCHIVE

### 5.1 Finds

- 5.1.1 After washing and rapid analysis, the majority of the finds were discarded in accordance with industry guidelines.
- 5.1.2 The plano-convex flint knife was retained, and is currently stored at Wessex Archaeology's office in Sheffield.

### 5.2 OASIS

- 5.2.1 An OASIS online record (<http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main>) has been initiated (wessexar1-337572), with key fields and a .pdf version of the final report submitted. Copies of the OASIS record will be integrated into the relevant local and national records and published through the Archaeology Data Service ArchSearch catalogue.

### 5.3 Security copy

- 5.3.1 In line with current best practice (eg, Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.

### 5.4 Copyright

- 5.4.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative archive relating to the Site will be retained by Wessex Archaeology Ltd under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved. The recipient museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use shall be non-profitmaking, and conforms with the Copyright and Related Rights regulations 2003.





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## APPENDIX 1: OASIS FORM

**OASIS ID: wessexar1-337572**

### Project details

Project name	Land off Harthill Road, Thorpe Salvin, South Yorkshire
Short description of the project	In November 2016, staff from Wessex Archaeology undertook fieldwalking training on agricultural land to the west of Thorpe Salvin, South Yorkshire, to which the landowner had generously provided access. Approximately 12 hectares of a single field were fieldwalked over a three-day period. All located finds were of post-medieval or modern date and were subsequently discarded. The single exception was a small plano-convex flint knife of probable Early Bronze Age date. Such objects are often recovered from burials or other ceremonial deposits. This single find may therefore be indicative of ritual or votive activity within the vicinity, although no associated finds or monuments are recorded nearby
Project dates	Start: 14-11-2016 End: 18-11-2016
Previous/future work	No / No
Any project codes associated with reference codes	THS16 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 2 - Operations to a depth less than 0.25m
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	PLANO CONVEX KNIFE Early Bronze Age
Investigation type	"Systematic Field Walking"
Prompt	Voluntary/self-interest
Prompt	In-house training

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	SOUTH YORKSHIRE ROTHERHAM THORPE SALVIN Land off Harthill Road, Thorpe Salvin, South Yorkshire
Postcode	S26 6UY
Study area	12 Hectares
Site coordinates	SK 51080 81550 53.328128179238 -1.232957986398 53 19 41 N 001 13 58 W Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown
Height OD / Depth	Min: 119m Max: 128m



### Project creators

Name of Wessex Archaeology  
Organisation

Project brief Wessex Archaeology  
originator

Project design Wessex archaeology  
originator

Project Andrew Norton  
director/manager

Project supervisor Jonathan Buttery

Name of Wessex Archaeology  
sponsor/funding  
body

### Project archives

Physical Contents "Worked stone/lithics"

Digital Archive no museum deposit  
recipient

Digital Contents "Survey"

Digital Media "Images raster / digital photography"  
available

Paper Archive No  
Exists?

Paper Archive no museum deposit  
recipient

### Project bibliography 1

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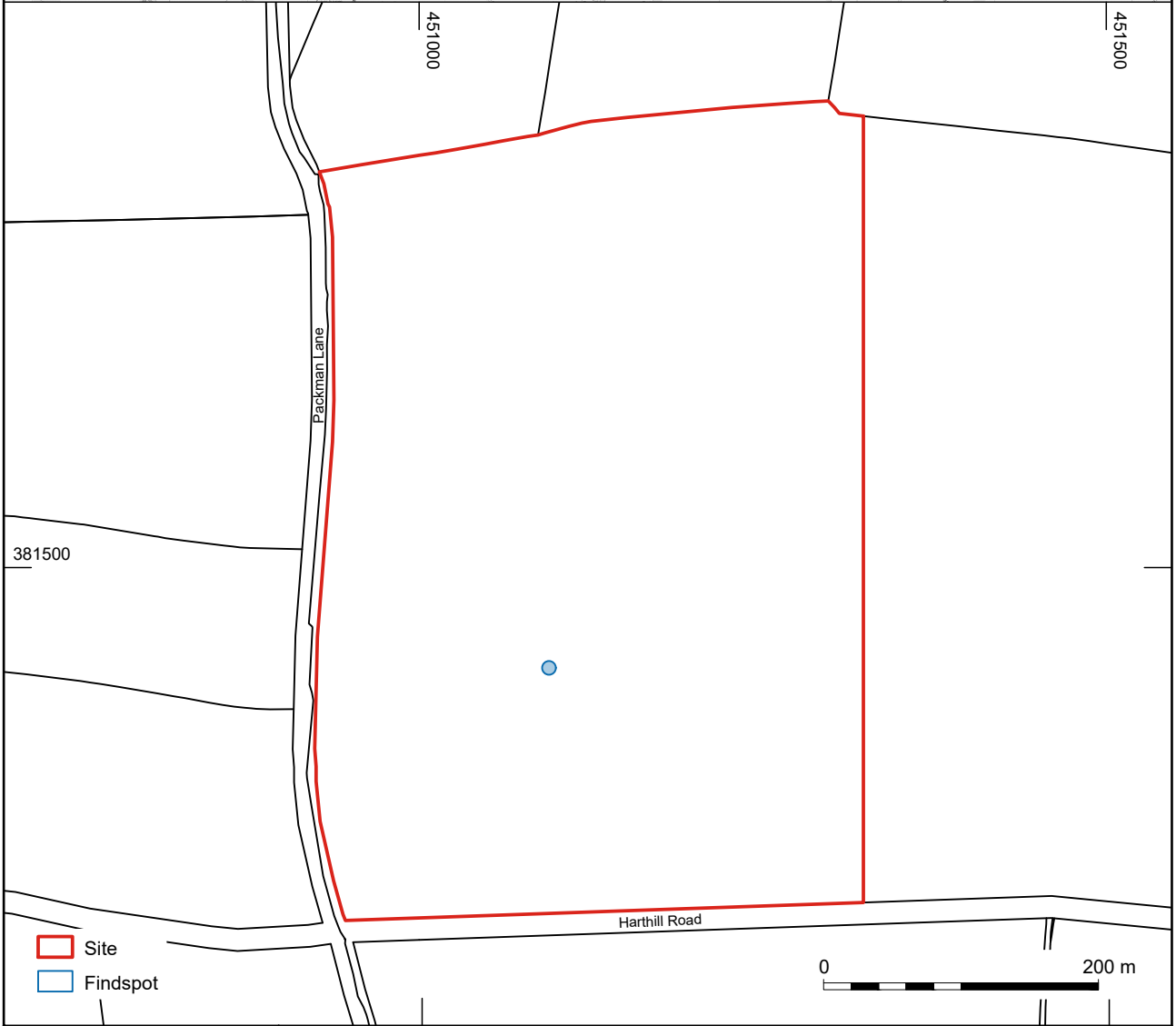
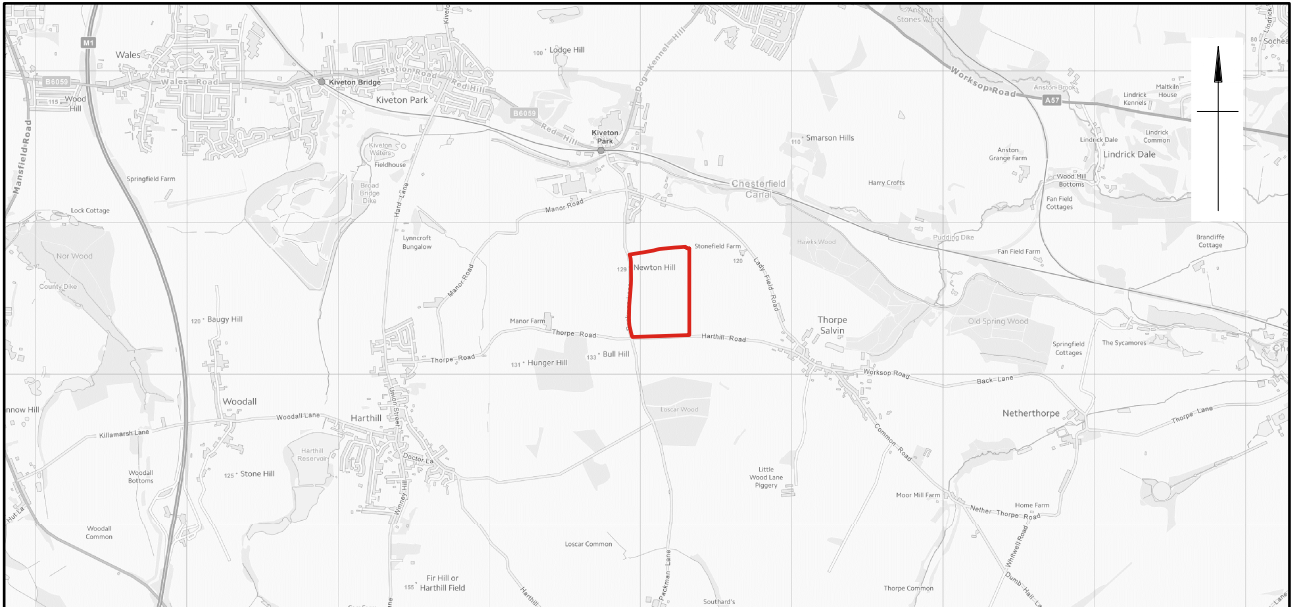
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Site location showing flint knife findspot

Figure 1



Plate 1: Clay tobacco pipe fragment



Plate 2: 19th/20th-century ceramic fragment

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Plate 3: Walking shot



Plate 4: Looking south/downslope across the survey area to Loscar Wood and Loscar Common wind turbines



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Plate 5: The plano-convex flint knife

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