

An Archaeological Watching Brief at Woolavington Down and Tegleaze Farm West Sussex

Centred at NGR 493906 115588

Project No: 6847

Site Code: WDT 16

ASE Report No: 2016284

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Introduction

Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by Natural England to undertake an archaeological watching brief covering approximately 3.4km of a service trench linking a new borehole to a number of drinking troughs for livestock in the vicinity of Tegleaze and on Woolavington Down, on the South Downs south and south-east of Gaffham, henceforth known as 'The Site'. This includes a section which crosses a Scheduled Ancient Monument known as Cross dyke on Woolavington Down, 625m east of Tegleaze Farm. The Site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 493906, 115588 and its location is shown in Figure 1. The monitoring was undertaken over a three day period in June 2016 by Simon Stevens (Senior Archaeologist).

Archaeological Background

The trench ran across undulating chalk downland laid to pasture, and crossed the alignment of a *cross dyke*, (a Scheduled Ancient Monument consisting of a linear bank and associated ditch) on Woolavington Down, c.625 m to the east of Tegleaze Farm (List Ref. 1015964). The trench crossed part of the monument previously damaged by the insertion of a gateway between two pasture fields.

Stratigraphic Sequence

The excavated trench was a maximum of 750mm wide and a maximum of 950mm deep. The stratigraphic sequence was similar along the entire monitored length of the trench, consisting of mid-brown silty clay topsoil overlying an intermittent deposit of brownish orange silty clay subsoil, which in turn overlay the 'natural' chalk. To the west of the borehole these layers were recorded as contexts [001], [002] and [003] respectively and to the east as contexts [004], [005] and [006].

Context Number	Type	Description	Max. Deposit Thickness (m)
001	Layer	Topsoil	0.32
002	Layer	Subsoil	0.27
003	Layer	'Natural' Chalk	-
004	Layer	Topsoil	0.34
005	Layer	Subsoil	0.29
006	Layer	'Natural' Chalk	-

Table 1: Recorded contexts

The point at which the new pipe trench crossed the Scheduled Ancient Monument had been heavily disturbed during the construction and subsequent use of the gateway, leaving no trace of the earthwork forming the bank. There had been heavily truncation of the area in

which the ditch was expected from the roots of mature trees and bracken, and no tangible traces of the feature were seen despite cleaning the sections of the trench.

A small assemblage of flintwork was recovered from the topsoil along the alignment. There were no obvious concentrations of the material.

The Flintwork by Karine Le Hégarat

The watching brief produced a total of 33 pieces of struck flint weighing 776g. Four fragments of burnt unworked flint weighing 139g were also recovered. The flintwork was quantified by piece count and weight and was catalogued directly into an Excel spreadsheet. Table 2 summarises the assemblage.

Category	Flakes	Blade	Cores	Modified pieces	Total
No	28	1	2	2	33

Table 2: The flintwork

The material came entirely from topsoil deposits (contexts [001] and [004]). The condition of the flintwork varies, but the large majority of the pieces are in a poor condition, displaying moderate or heavy edge damage. The heavily worn state of the flints suggests that the material has undergone successive depositions. Iron marks were noted on flakes from context [004]. These marks are frequently associated with ploughing activities. Just over half the pieces are recorticated to varying degrees.

The assemblage is dominated by débitage products of which flakes predominate. Two modified pieces were recovered: a side scraper and an end scraper. Based on technological and morphological grounds, a broad Neolithic / Bronze Age date can be allocated to the bulk of the assemblage. A small earlier component was also present consisting of a blade core (54g) and a blade.

The assemblage provides evidence for prehistoric presence in the vicinity of the site. With no diagnostic pieces, it is difficult to date precisely the flintwork, but a broad Neolithic – Bronze Age date can be assigned to the flintwork. The exceptions are two pieces (a blade and a blade core) that are likely to be earlier.

Discussion and Conclusions

No archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the watching brief, although a background scatter of flintwork was recovered, representative of utilisation of the downland over long periods of prehistory.

No surviving above- or below-ground remains of the Scheduled *cross dyke* were disturbed during the work, which confirmed that the section of the monument crossed by the pipe trench had already been compromised by the gateway.

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© Archaeology South-East		Woolavington Down & Tegleaze Farm, West Sussex	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 6947	July 2016	Site location with line of excavated pipe trench	
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