

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

S O U T H

**Land at Burleigh Farm,
Charing, Ashford, Kent**

Archaeological Evaluation (fieldwalking)

by Steve Ford

Site Code: BFC13/81

(TQ 9325 4865)

Land at Burleigh Farm, Charing, Ashford, Kent

**An Archaeological Evaluation (Fieldwalking)
for Robert Brett and Sons Limited**

by Steve Ford

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code BFC13/81fw

April 2013

Summary

Site name: Land at Burleigh Farm, Charing, Ashford, Kent

Grid reference: TQ 9325 4970

Site activity: Evaluation (fieldwalking)

Date and duration of project: 15–16th March 2013

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Steve Ford

Site code: BFC13/81

Area of site: c. 4.6 hectares

Summary of results: The fieldwalking recovered struck flint and pottery finds representing several periods. The Mesolithic, later Neolithic/Bronze Age, Roman, Medieval and post medieval periods were all represented. There was no marked clustering of the struck flint sufficient to indicate the presence of an occupation site. Similarly, sherds of Roman pottery were few and can be considered to represent no more than the manuring of farmland. Medieval pottery was more plentiful and was concentrated towards the southern end of the field, but again seems typical of a scatter resulting from the manuring of farmland.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with a local museum willing to accept it.

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Report 13/81

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological fieldwalking evaluation carried out at Burleigh Farm, Charing, Ashford, Kent (TQ 9325 4970) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Andy Josephs of Andrew Josephs Associates on behalf of Robert Brett and Sons Limited, Robert Brett House, Milton Manor Farm, Ashford Road, Canterbury, Kent, CT4 7PP. Planning permission is to be sought from Kent County Council to extract minerals from the site. The fieldwork was undertaken by Steve Ford and Aidan Colyer on 15th–16th March 2013 and the site code is BFC13/81. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited in due course with a local museum willing to accept it.

Archaeological Background

The site lies within an area with a modest volume of sites and finds recorded within the Kent Historic Environment Record. Most entries nearby refer to post-medieval buildings within the hamlet of Charing Heath but with some buildings of medieval origin present, including Burleigh Farmhouse. A possible medieval chapel lies to the west of the site. Fieldwork in previous sand quarries in the area recorded an Early Iron Age site and a Late Iron Age/Roman settlement with cemetery to the south-east. Stray finds included two Neolithic flint axes and a Roman coin. Historic maps show that in the 19th century woodland bordering the north-eastern side of the site was formerly a brickworks.

Location, topography and geology

The proposal site is located on a plot of land to the north of Burleigh Farm and west of Charing Heath although only a parcel of land to the east was available for study (Fig. 2). The land is currently in use as an arable field. The underlying geology of the site mostly comprises lower greensand (Folkestone Beds) but with gault clay in the north-eastern corner. (BGS 1976). The land slopes down to the south and west from a height of *c.* 105m above Ordnance Datum to *c.* 97m but with a slight hollow towards the centre of the field.

Objectives and methodology

The specific research aims of this project are:

- to determine if any flint scatters representing pre-Iron Age occupation and landuse are present; and
- to determine if any ceramic or other artefacts representing prehistoric and later occupation and landuse are present.

The evaluation comprised one component - fieldwalking. The fieldwalking was to take place along north-south lines spaced at 10m intervals based on the National Grid. Material was to be collected from units of 10m intervals along these lines with an average search width of 1m. This approximates to a 10% sample of the surface area of the site. The methodology is comparable with that practised in other regions of central southern England (Richards 1990; Ford 1987a, appendix 1) though the sample fraction here is higher. All pre-19th century artefacts (primarily struck flint and pottery) were to be collected and retained. Dense scatters of brick/tile or burnt flint were to be recorded in the field but only a sample of material would be collected from these for dating purposes.

A record was made of conditions which may have influenced recovery rates, such as stoniness of ground, vegetation cover, bright sunlight and which individual walked which line. The topography was also recorded to assist in interpretation of the finds.

Results

Collection conditions

A total area of c. 4.6ha was fieldwalked by 2 individuals. All of the field had been planted, with a crop emerging and the whole ground surface was observable. The north-eastern portion of the site was, though, heavily rutted with standing water in places. The weather was mostly overcast but with occasional sunny spells. The ground was damp. There was a little natural stone (chert) present.

Finds

Struck flint by Steve Ford

In all 35 struck flints were recovered as detailed in Appendix 1 and summarized in Appendix 2. Most of the flint was black but some were made from a grey flint and others were patinated a bluish-white colour. Several of the pieces were made from the local chert present on the field itself.

The collection comprised 22 flakes, 3 narrow flakes, 4 cores, 3 spalls (pieces less than 20x20mm), 3 scrapers, and a retouched flake. Their distribution is shown in Figure 2. The flint collection is dominated by broad flakes but with a number of narrow flakes (assigned by eye) present. These pieces are convincing as representing a Mesolithic or early Neolithic component to the collection.

There are few individual items of note. One flake has been edge retouched, similar to that used to fashion gun flints, but is not of square shape to confirm this interpretation.

Distribution

Before the recorded distribution of the lithic material can be interpreted in terms of its archaeological significance an assessment of the nature of the use and discard of struck flint and the activity represented by flint scatters is required. In contrast to pottery, which is predominantly used only on occupation sites, struck flint is worked, used, and discarded or lost, on, adjacent to, and away from occupied areas. Procurement of raw materials itself produces further material not necessarily located close to occupied areas, and as for pottery, used flint can end up in middens which are later used to manure arable fields. Durable flint, much of which is not chronologically distinctive, was widely used and discarded during much of prehistory, as settlement patterns and subsistence strategies changed. As such, it should not be surprising that struck flint can be widely distributed across the landscape without marked clustering, or with widespread clusters of higher density material representing repeated use of the same location over many generations (Foley 1981). Coupled to this are taphonomic processes such as ploughing and colluviation which can lead to the wide dispersal of originally dense and discrete scatters (Yorston *et al.* 1990). There is a further body of evidence to indicate that much early prehistoric occupation is now represented only by scatters of struck flint within the topsoil (Healy 1987). Large quantities of struck flint need not imply the presence of significant numbers of sub-surface features.

For this project, there is a low presence of struck flint across the whole area fieldwalked but with no marked clustering nor a high density of finds (Fig. 2). It is considered that these finds reflect off-site or manuring activity in the surrounding landscape.

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

Some 39 sherds of pottery were recovered during the project. The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds by fabric type is shown in Appendix 3 and summarized in Appendix 4. The fabric types were recorded using the codes and chronologies of the Canterbury Archaeological Trust Fabric series for Kent. The numeric codes in bold are those used in the database and Appendices. The following fabrics were noted:

300: EM.M5, Ashford Potters Corner shell-filled sandy ware, AD1125–1250.

301: EM4: West Kent sandy ware, mid 12th – mid 13th century.
302: M38B: NW Kent fine sandy ware (reduced), AD1175–1400.
425: PM1: Post-medieval Red Earthenware, 1550–1700.
1000: Modern
1001: Roman

Distribution by Steve Ford

The 36 pre-modern pottery sherds recovered were distributed as shown on Figure 3. The collection exhibits a moderately mixed date range but the majority (61%) is of Post-medieval date. Eleven sherds were of medieval date with four of Roman date. For both earlier periods, the sherds were generally abraded which may indicate that the areas was used as farmland (and manured) rather than being the centre of a settlement complex.

Burnt flint and brick/tile

A very small volume of burnt flint and brick/tile fragments was observed on the site but two clusters of tile were noted to the north and south of the site (Fig. 3).

Conclusion

The fieldwalking has recovered a low volume of artefacts of several periods with struck flint finds representing earlier prehistoric activity and pottery finds representing Roman, Medieval and post-medieval activity.

For earlier prehistory, the struck flint suggests no more than casual loss or discard in the landscape, with most of the material likely to reflect later Neolithic or Bronze Age activity. However, a few narrow flakes (blades) indicate a low level of earlier prehistoric (Mesolithic?) activity also.

The pottery would appear to represent scatters formed by the manuring of farmland in Roman, medieval and later periods.

References

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- Richards, J C, 1990, *The Stonehenge Environs Project*, Hist Buildings Monuments Comm (Engl) Rep **16**, London
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APPENDIX 1: Catalogue of Struck Flint

<i>NGR East (TQ)</i>	<i>NGR North</i>	<i>Intact Flake</i>	<i>Broken flake</i>	<i>Broken Blade</i>	<i>Spall</i>	<i>Core</i>	<i>Other</i>
93090	49710	1					
93100	49710						retouched flake (gun?)
93110	49660	1					
93110	49690		1				
93120	49690			1			
93120	49720					1	
93120	49650				1		
93130	49700				1		
93130	49710					1	
93130	49770		1				
93140	49680		1				
93140	49780		1				
93140	49790		1				
93150	49620						Scraper
93150	49630		1				
93160	49810	1					
93170	49820	1					
93170	49650			1			
93170	49780					1	
93180	49820	1					
93180	49740	1					
93180	49810		1				
93190	49830	1					
93190	49780		1				
93200	49840	1					
93200	49700	1					
93200	49700						Scraper
93200	49800		2				
93210	49790				1		
93210	49770		1				
93220	49600						Scraper
93230	49670					1	
93240	49620		1				
93240	49590			1(large)			
93250	49680	1					

APPENDIX 2: Summary of struck flint

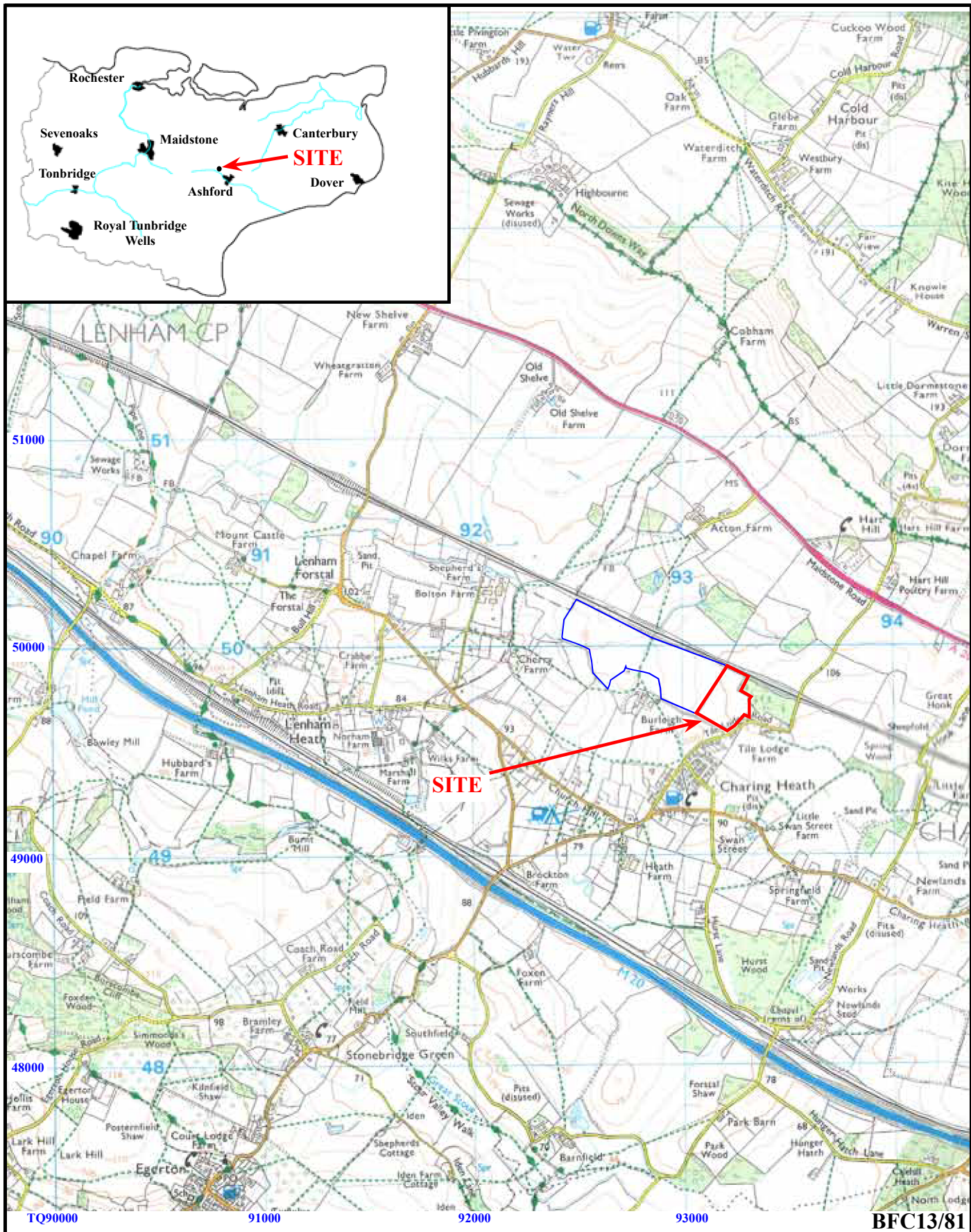
<i>Type</i>	<i>Number</i>
Intact flakes	10
Broken flakes	12
Broken narrow flakes	3
Spalls	2
Cores	4
Scrapers	3
Retouched flake (gun flint?)	1

APPENDIX 3: Catalogue of Pottery

<i>NGR East (TQ)</i>	<i>NGR North</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Date</i>
93090	49700	1	3	425	Late Post- medieval
93090	49690	1	3	1001	Roman
93100	49670	1	15	301	Medieval
93100	49670	1	9	425	Late Post- medieval
93100	49700	1	2	301	Medieval
93120	49670	1	12	301	Medieval
93130	49680	1	2	1000	Modern
93150	49620	1	10	301	Medieval
93160	49620	1	10	302	Medieval
93160	49650	1	3	301	Medieval
93170	49620	2	4	300	Medieval
93170	49620	1	1	301	Medieval
93170	49620	2	14	1001	Roman
93170	49630	3	3	425	Late Post- medieval
93170	49780	1	5	425	Late Post- medieval
93190	49640	1	4	1000	Modern
93200	49590	5	138	425	Late Post- medieval
93200	49800	1	2	425	Late Post- medieval
93210	49790	3	8	425	Late Post- medieval
93210	49800	3	27	425	Late Post- medieval
93220	49670	1	3	425	Late Post- medieval
93220	49720	1	10	1001	Roman
93230	49670	1	10	425	Late Post- medieval
93240	49590	1	32	1000	Modern
93240	49600	1	4	300	Medieval
93240	49620	1	1	301	Medieval
93240	49810	1	1	425	Late Post- medieval

APPENDIX 4: Summary of Pottery by date

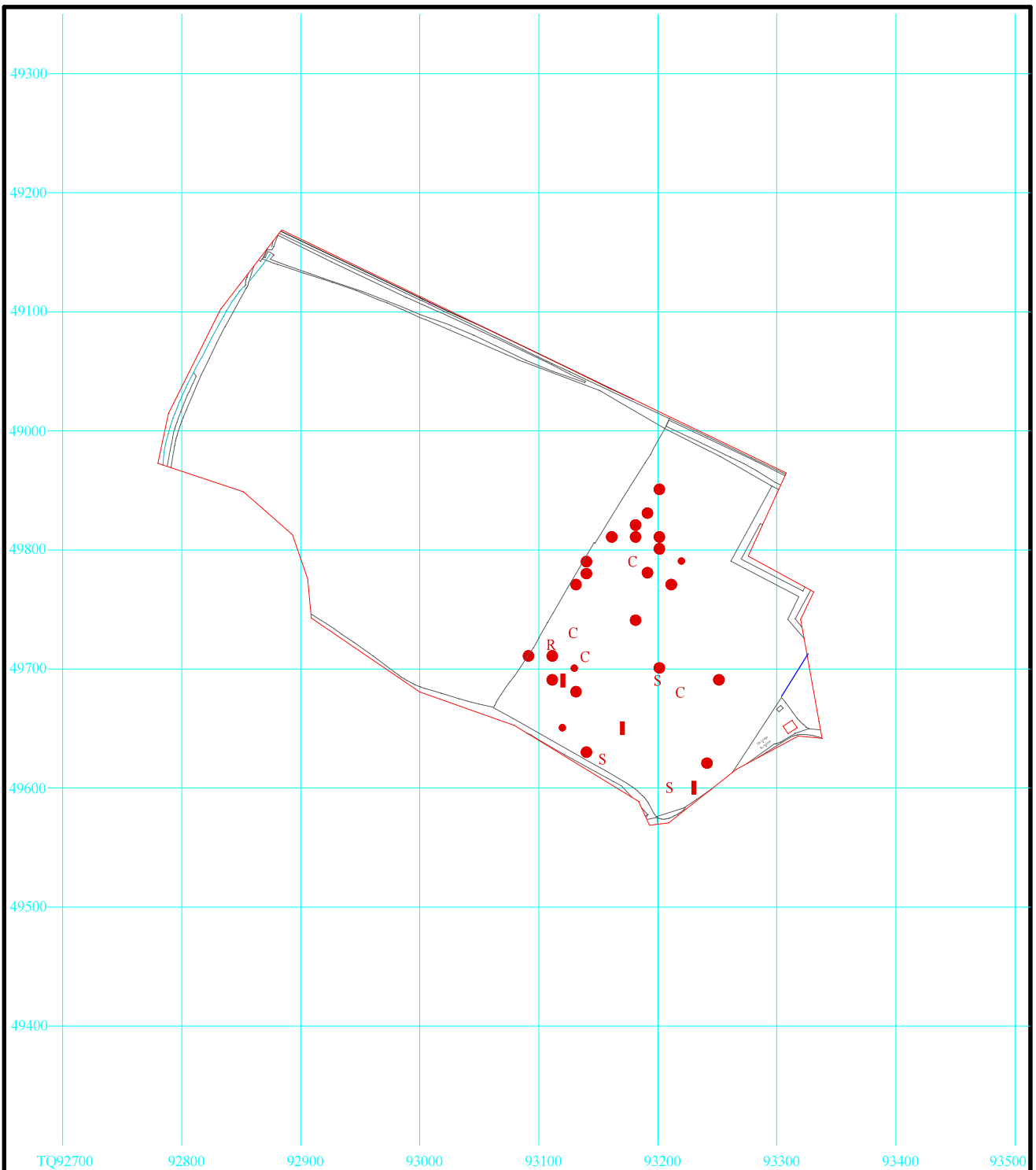
<i>Date</i>	<i>Number of sherds</i>
Roman	4
Medieval	11
Post Medieval	21
Late Post-medieval (19th/20th C)	3



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Figure 1. Location of site within Charing and Kent

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- Flake
- Narrow flake
- C Core
- Spall
- S Scraper
- R Retouched flake

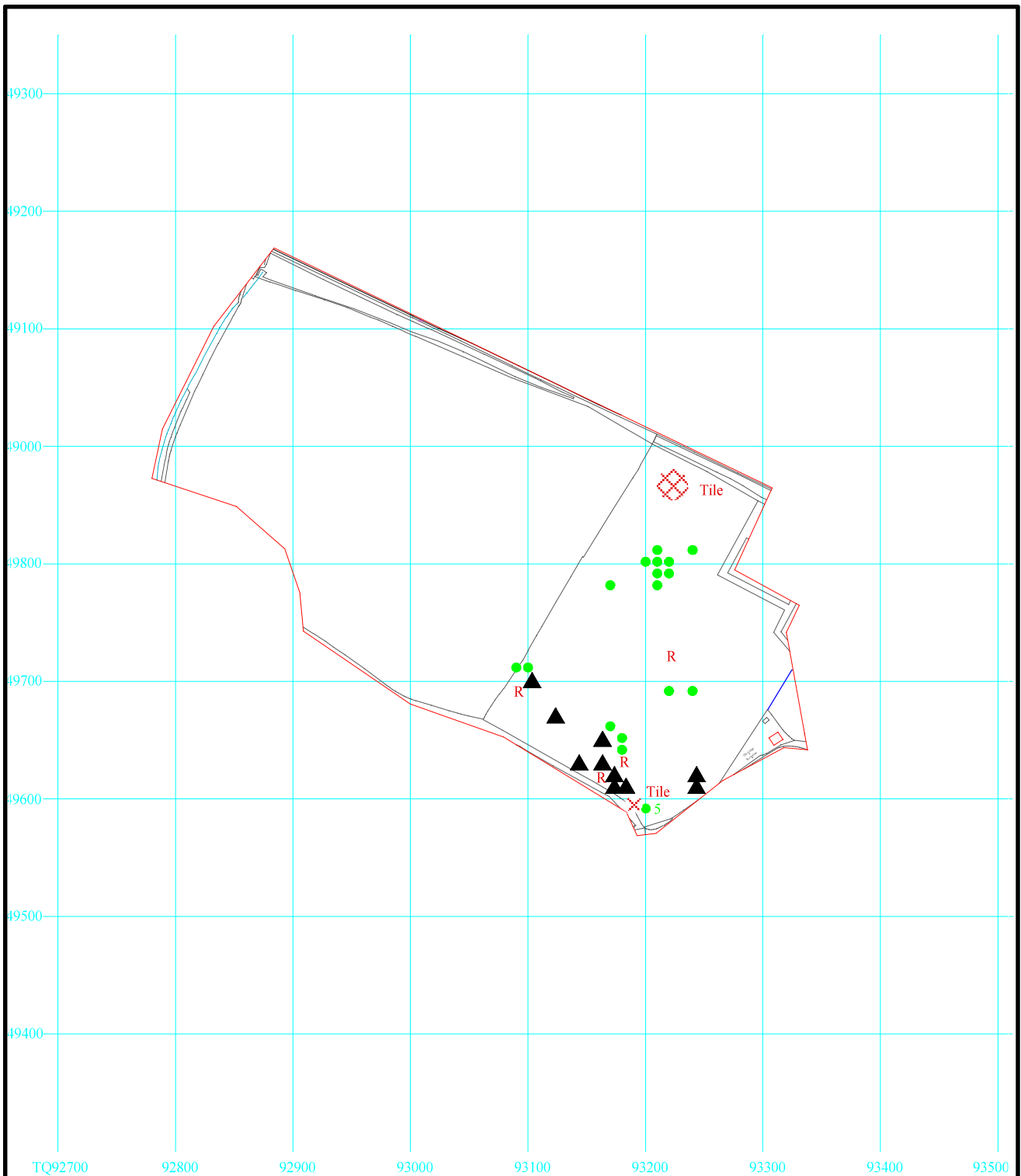
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Figure 2. Fieldwalking finds: flint





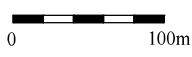
- R Roman Pottery
- ▲ Medieval Pottery
- Post-Medieval Pottery

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Figure 3. Fieldwalking finds: pottery.



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TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





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