

Ruxox Farm, Maulden

1. The Prehistoric Finds

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RUXOX FARM was centred round a fine moated enclosure (TL/048360) which in Medieval times surrounded the Augustine Priory of Ruxox (Horoeks Oak), a small cell of Dunstable Priory founded in 1140. The land in this area is now divided into market garden small holdings, but for the purpose of these reports will be treated as a whole.

This area under the plough has for many years yielded prehistoric flints, Roman coins, pot sherds and artifacts of the Medieval period. Some of these items have been handed to Luton and Bedford museums; but most have been lost and little is

known about them. Fortunately Mr J Course, who farmed the land during the 1960's possesses a keen interest in archaeology and has found many objects which he has carefully preserved. The flints discussed here are from his collection. The Roman and later periods will be the subject of future reports.

Physical Features

Geographically Ruxox lies at the junction of the lower greensand ridge and the alluvium of the Flit valley. Two distinct soil types arise from these

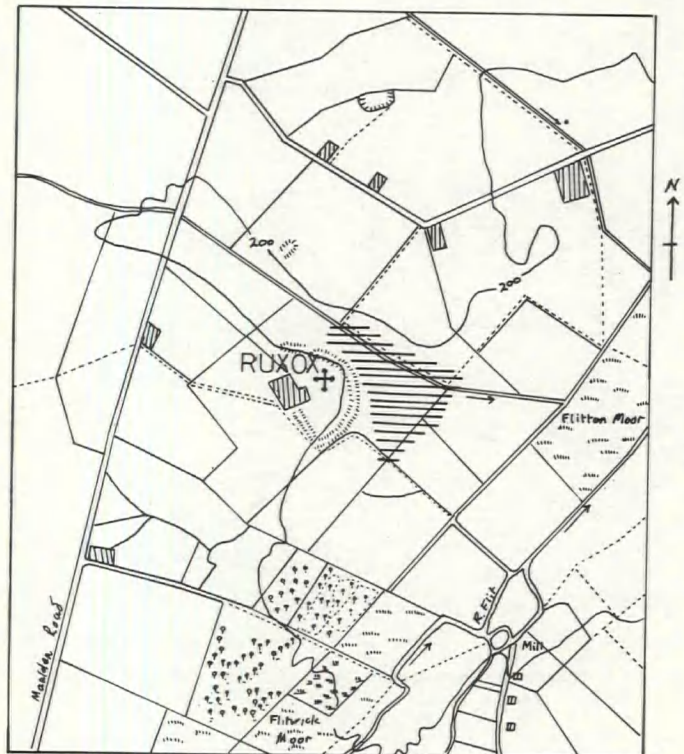


Fig 1 The location of Ruxox Farm, Maulden.

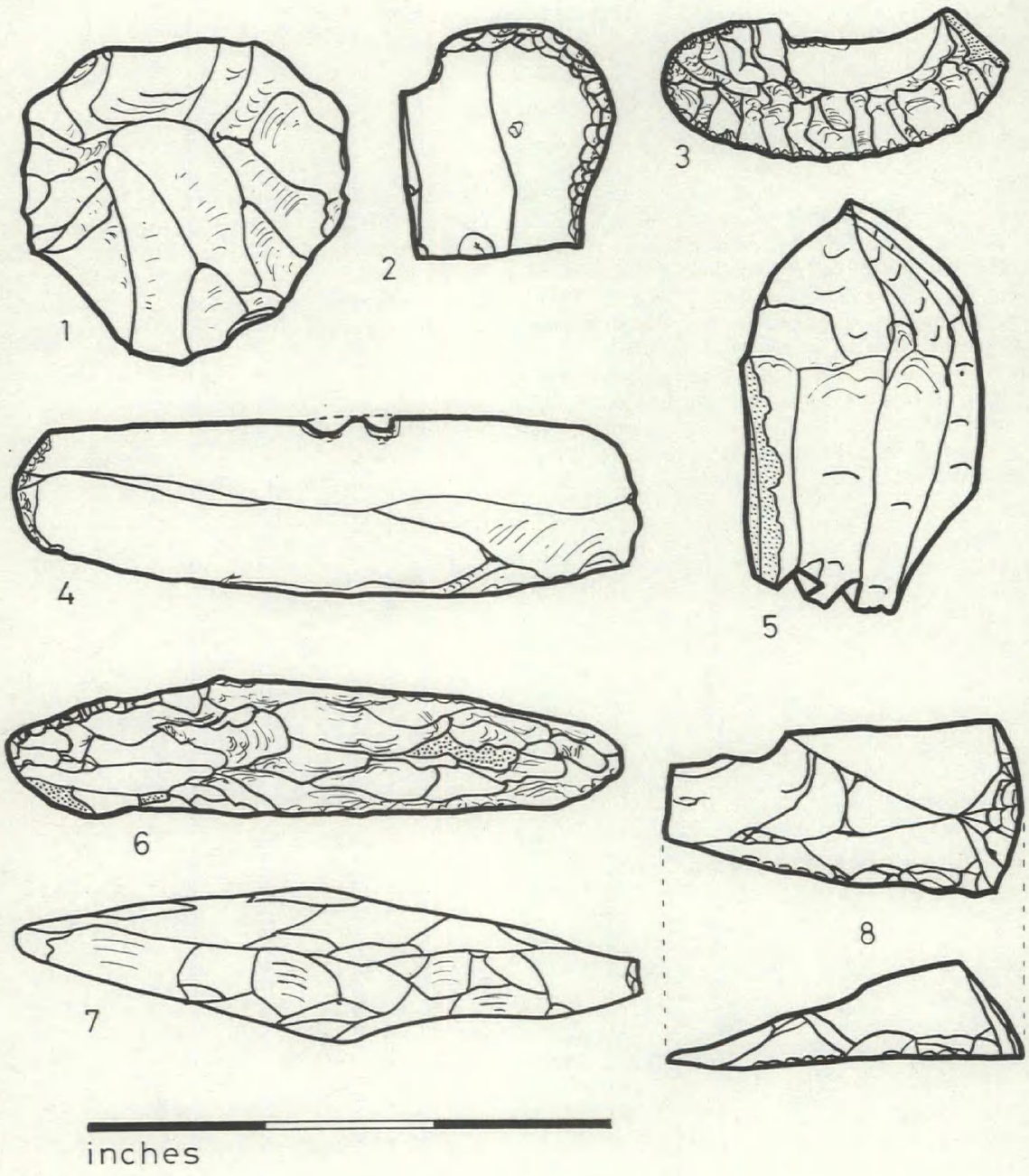


Fig 2 Flints from Ruxox Farm (1-8) (Full Size).

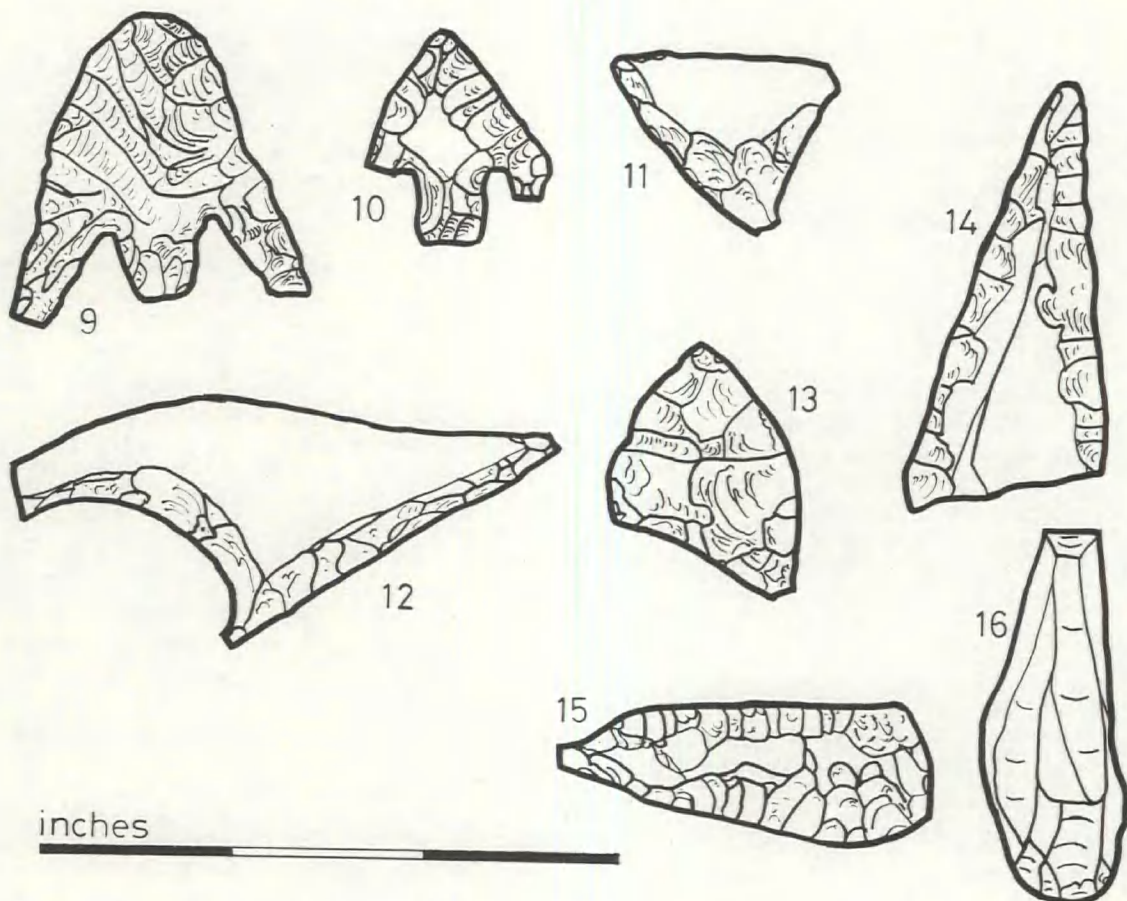


Fig 3 Flints from Ruxox Farm (9-16) (Full Size).

parent materials. On the greensand a freely drained loam occurs with a finely developed soil structure, whereas a calcereous gley overlaying an almost impervious plastic clay is associated with the alluvium (D W King *Soils of the Luton and Bedford District* (1969)). The effects of these two conditions can be seen in the modern agriculture and the natural vegetation of the area. The poor drainage of the alluvium has produced marshy areas and caused a heavy deposit of peat, which was dug commercially until recent years (*Beds. Mag.* 11 (1967-69) 185-189). Indications are that the drainage has deteriorated since the 3rd century A.D., as Roman floors have been found twelve inches below the present water table and in another part of the site Roman artifacts have been found below a layer of peat. Until recently

very little was grown on the alluvium, but modern deep ploughing and drainage is reclaiming some of the land. The soil of the greensand is very fertile and easily worked. It is however prone to erosion by the strong winds which prevail in this exposed area. Sections taken through Roman occupation areas have shown wind deposited materials, which suggest similar cultivated soil conditions in the 3rd Century A.D. The alluvium joins the greensand just below the 200' contour shown on the map and it was on this line where most of the flint artifacts were found (See fig. 1).

Flint Finds. (Figs. 2 and 3)

1. Microlithic core, black translucent, unworn.
2. Broken black translucent blade, retouched one end and one side to make scraper, un-

- worn.
3. Unifacially worked artifact, black translucent, unworn.
 4. Neolithic blade, slight white patina, unworn, retouched at one end, but recently damaged on long side.
 5. Bipolar black translucent flint core.
 6. Bifacially worked grey opaque fabricator unworn.
 7. Bifacially worked grey opaque fabricator worn at one end.
 8. Steeply corinated black translucent unworn flint scraper.
 9. Barbed and short tanged arrowhead, bifacially worked, light brown translucent unpatinated, unworn, one barb broken (Early Bronze Age).
 10. Petit tranchet derivative arrowhead, black translucent, unpatinated, unworn.
 11. Petit tranchet derivative arrowhead, black translucent, unpatinated, unworn (?Neolithic).
 12. Bifacially worked translucent light brown unpatinated leaf shaped arrowhead, broken (?Neolithic).
 13. Unifacially worked black translucent blade, unifacially retouched on two sides, unpatinated unworn (?arrowhead).

14. Unifacially retouched flint blade, black translucent, unpatinated.
15. Opaque slightly patinated flint flake retouched to make end scraper.

Also in collection but not illustrated. One Neolithic ground stone axe, white patinated, broken. One Microlithic core and three struck flakes.

Conclusions

The desirability of this site to man since early times can be appreciated when the physical features are considered. Indications suggest a rich lightly forested area in Mesolithic times, with a larger river than today providing water and attracting animals for hunting. During the introduction of early farming the greensand would have been easily cleared and the light fertile soil ideal for cultivation for primitive tools. No Neolithic or Bronze Age pottery has been found to date on this site and no signs of their living areas. This is not surprising in view of the light easily eroded soil where artifacts of all periods continually arrive on the land surface.

Acknowledgements

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