

HS2 site at Fosse Way 1N19ITCAR

The Flint

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Introduction

A total of 52 pieces of worked flint and 68 pieces of burnt unworked flint (weighing 17g) were recovered from the investigations at Fosse Way (*Table 1*). The assemblage includes potential Mesolithic or earlier Neolithic blades and an early Bronze Age arrowhead; and is therefore likely to be chronologically mixed.

Table 1. Summary of flint by type

Flint category	Total
Flake	11
Blade	5
Blade-like flake	3
Irregular waste	2
Sieved chips	29
Barbed and tanged arrowhead	1
Notched flake	1
Total	52
Burnt unworked	68
Burnt unworked (g)	17

Methodology

The worked flint was catalogued according to a standard debitage, core or tool type. Information about burning, breaks, condition, raw material and technology was recorded and, where possible, dating was attempted. In addition, burnt unworked flint was quantified by count and weight. Flint recovered from soil samples was also recorded.

Assessment of assemblage

The worked flint was recovered from 21 contexts. Most contexts contained just one or two pieces with no context containing more than eleven pieces of flint. Unretouched debitage dominates the assemblage (50 pieces) with over half comprising chips recovered from sieved residues. Of the eight blades and blade-like flakes, four pieces exhibited dorsal blade scars consistent with removal from planned blade cores. This may suggest a Mesolithic or earlier Neolithic date for these pieces. Characteristics associated with hard hammer percussion, such as clear cones of percussion and hinge terminations, were also present.

The barbed and tanged arrowhead (from context 250325) is a fine example. It has invasive bifacial retouch and intact point and barbs. It measures 35mm long and 25mm

wide. The arrowhead is firmly dated to the early Bronze Age. The notched flake (from context 240180) is a larger flake with a hinge termination. It has a deliberate notch on the distal right formed using direct retouch. The piece is not chronologically diagnostic.

Condition

Overall, the condition of the assemblage is good. A total of 10 pieces (43%, excluding sieved chips) are in a fresh condition and 12 pieces (52%) exhibit slight post-depositional damage, such as chips to vulnerable unretouched edges. Just one piece has a more moderate level of damage. Surface alteration, in the form of cortication, is not present in the assemblage. Just two pieces are broken and none are burnt.

Discussion and recommendations

The technological appearance of the worked flint from Fosse Way is chronologically mixed, with evidence for both planned blade production and later hard hammer percussion. The only firmly dated piece is the early Bronze Age barbed and tanged arrowhead, which was recovered as a single worked flint and may be the result of a casual loss. The small size of the assemblage limits the potential for additional analysis and further work is not required. The significance of the assemblage lies in its representation of human activity at the site during prehistory, perhaps as early as the Mesolithic or earlier Neolithic and definitely during the early Bronze Age.