

Babraham Research Campus Cambridge: Flood Compensation Scheme Phase 2

Archaeological Monitoring and Recording



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Phase 2**

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In July 2013 the Cambridge Archaeological Unit carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during excavations for the second phase of the Flood Compensation Scheme at the Babraham Research Campus. This involved a topsoil and partial subsoil strip of an area (Area B (0.39 ha)) which lay close to the river frontage, thus 200m to the north-west of the archaeologically excavated R and D Land, and beyond the area of the main Roman settlement. A quick walk-over survey of another stripped area (Area A (0.28 ha)) c.180m to the west of this confirmed an absence of archaeology, but at the south end of Area B a number of amorphous burnt flint spreads and pits of probable Neolithic – Early Bronze Age date were found during the digging of a balance pond and drain. These features were cut by a series of three narrow NW-SE to SSE-NNW trending ditches of probable Roman date. Immediately to the north-east of this excavation a field walk and metal detecting survey of the stripped topsoil revealed an interesting but mixed-up assemblage of material which included Mesolithic – Early Bronze Age flint, minor amounts of Roman pottery, lead scrap and a coin, plus a slightly better assemblage of Medieval metalwork including a well-preserved Henry III silver penny, a number of 12th-14th century copper-alloy buckles and straps, and a few Postmedieval - modern finds. The shallow depth of necessary excavation within this area meant that the natural flint-filled hollow and other features revealed during the trench evaluation in March 2012 were not re-examined.

Introduction

Archaeological monitoring and recording of this phase of construction of the Flood Compensation Scheme was requested by the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team (CHET). The proposed Flood Compensation Scheme comprised two areas; Area A, which is centred on TL 50538/ 51234 and covers 0.28 ha, and Area B some 180m to the south-east of this which is centred on TL 50694/51036 and covers 0.39 ha (Figures 1 & 2). However, only Area B was monitored. The earth removal as part of this construction work involved the excavation of contoured/ graded scrapes of the topsoil/ subsoil/ natural within both these areas in so as to enhance the natural contour and control the water flow direction(s) to a series of balancing ponds. A large proportion of this excavation took place within the topsoil/ subsoil zone, and above the level of buried archaeology. Previous archaeological trench evaluations of this flood compensation area were undertaken in 2007 (Collins 2007) and March 2012 (Collins 2012), the latter examining the part of Area B immediately to the north of the current area of deep excavation which lies adjacent to the river bank (Figure 3). This work took place between the 4th and 30th July 2013.

Geology and topography

The underlying geology here consists of the Lower Chalk with overlying Terrace Gravels close to the river. Upslope from here, more extensive surface deposits of Holocene colluvium (hillwash) fringe the lower slopes of the chalk. The ground level slopes downwards towards the river from a height of 24.3m AOD to 22.0m AOD. Holywell Nodular Chalk Formation forming the base of the Middle Chalk (BGS 2002).

Archaeological background

Since 1994 the CAU has carried out a significant amount of archaeological work within the grounds of Babraham Research Institute (Butler 1994; Robinson 1995; Regan 1995; Wills 2004; Swaysland 2005; Armour 2006, 2007; Timberlake & Armour 2006; Timberlake *et al.* 2007; Armour *et al.* 2007; Timberlake 2011; Collins & Timberlake 2011; Collins 2012a+b) (Figure 2 shows all the sites of archaeological excavation). A summary account of the archaeology is being prepared for a forthcoming East Anglian Archaeology monograph entitled *Babraham – A Roman Cemetery and its Associated Settlement* (Timberlake *et al.* forthcoming).

Prehistoric archaeology within the vicinity of the Hall is limited to evidence for the *ad hoc*. Neolithic – Early Bronze Age exploitation of flint on the gravel terraces located close to the edge of the former palaeo-channels of the river (Timberlake and Armour *ibid.*). More significantly there appears to have been a concerted (and predominantly Neolithic) extraction of flint associated with a number of flint-filled periglacial solution features (perhaps originating as ice-filled polygons or pingos) such as the one found and sampled along the route of the new Campus Access Road (Armour 2006) and also the depressions of Hollows A and B investigated during excavations carried out prior to the construction of the ARES Building (Armour *et al.* *ibid.*). The former (and nearest) of these periglacial-solution features associated with flint quarrying and working is located just to the north of the ARES Car Park, approx. 400m WNW of

the present development. The recent find of a Late Neolithic oblique flint arrowhead (identified E. Beadsmoore) within woodland near the Sewage Works also suggests the incidence of prehistoric flintworking activity directly to the south of here towards the river. Further hollows and colluvial spreads filled with hundreds of pieces of worked Mesolithic – Early Neolithic flint were found during the recent excavation of the R and D Land site (Collins 2012b).

Two large open area excavations located approximately 200m to the south-east of the Flood Compensation Scheme Area B (Armour 2007 and Collins 2012b) have revealed evidence for an extensive Romano-British settlement which appears to have been established shortly after the Roman conquest and continues through to the late Roman period. The most recent of these excavations on the R and D Land (Collins *ibid.*) has revealed the northern part of this settlement which includes a substantial series of boundary ditches alongside seven structures (including a large post-aisled building), two wells, an irregular shaped enclosure, some smaller ditches and paddocks, as well as pits and areas of quarrying. Associated with this settlement was a small Roman (2nd - 4th century AD) cemetery containing 40-50 burials, a few of them well preserved and moderately furnished with grave goods (Timberlake & Armour 2006). The remains of several Roman roads leading down towards crossing points on the river have been identified to the north-west of Babraham Hall (see Timberlake 2011).

Excavation within the same general area has revealed a Saxon-Early Medieval settlement, most of which appears to have lain to the south of the centre of the Roman settlement and to the west of Babraham Hall (Armour 2007). The westernmost edge of this coincides with the line of the Roman-Medieval road which probably crosses the river just to the west of St. Peter's Church founded in the 12th century AD. A small part of this same riverside area was excavated in advance of the construction of the Minerva (Biosciences) Building in 2004 (Wills 2004). This revealed a complex of Early-Late Saxon, Medieval and Post-medieval pits and ditches which appeared to increase in density towards the river's edge; the earliest find here included a single Early Saxon building (*grubenhaus*) from which a gilded brooch was recovered.

In 1994 archaeological evaluation of the area immediately to the east of the Hall revealed a paucity of Medieval or earlier features; the only other remains found being a brick paved yard surface associated with the demolition of an 18th century building alongside other 19th century roadway and possible garden features associated with the occupation of Babraham Hall (Butler 1994). The remains of garden features associated with this Postmedieval landscaping were also detected during the evaluation of the area beneath Building 270 (Timberlake 2009). Although originally established in 1580, the third (and present) Babraham Hall was not built until 1837, at which time there was also considerable expansion and re-landscaping of the gardens

Methodology

Given that evaluation trenching conducted within the northernmost Area A (Collins 2012a) had failed to reveal any archaeology, the earthmoving within this area was only briefly visited, although the area was fieldwalked for finds and metal detected in traverses. The whole of Area B was also fieldwalked and metal detected following the removal of the turf and the partial strip of the topsoil. Worked flint and pottery etc. were picked up and bagged on the spot along with the detected metal finds which

were dug out and removed from depths of up to 10-15 cms. All of these were given surface find numbers, and then plotted and picked up by the CAU Survey Team (see Figure 8).

Soil and sub-soil stripping within Area B was carried out under archaeological supervision. Particular attention was paid to the deeper cuts of each terrace level as the machining approached the river, alongside examination of the excavated 'runnels' cut at right angles to these, and much closer to the river, the excavation of a sloping 2m-wide drain leading to a deeper (25m x 20m x 3m) sump. Archaeological examination of the latter area was carried out progressively as the level was taken down, the exposed features being recorded, if necessary, in successive stages.

Stripping was undertaken using a tracked 360° machine with a 2m wide toothless ditching bucket. A bucket-sampling exercise was also carried out on some of the removed lower sub-soil in order to determine the extent of any background archaeological activity.

Excavation of archaeological features was carried out using hand tools. The recording followed a CAU modified MoLAS system (Spence 1990). Plans of the sump and drain excavations were drawn at 1:50 scale, whilst the feature sections were recorded at 1:10, alongside written context information. A digital photographic archive was compiled, and all work was carried out in strict accordance with statutory Health and Safety legislation and with the recommendations of SCAUM (Allen & Holt 2002). The CAU site code was RCB 13 (2).

Archive

A total of 45 contexts from ten features were excavated and recorded, and representative samples of burnt stone and burnt flint collected alongside some worked flint, animal bone, pottery and tile. In addition some 60 surface/ metal detector finds were picked up from Area A following the initial topsoil strip, and another eight surface finds from Area B. The documentary records and accompanying artefacts have been assembled into a catalogued archive in-line with Appendix 6 of MAP2 (English Heritage 1991) and are being stored within the Finds Department at CAU.

Results

Area A

Some eight pieces of redeposited worked flint were collected from the topsoil following the machine stripping. These were bagged and located by area, but were not plotted by the CAU survey team. No archaeology was encountered, although there were a number of tree-throws and also some natural erosional/periglacial features, as the top of the chalk here was lying close to the surface.

Area B

Fieldwalked surface finds picked up following the topsoil strip consisted mostly of fresh black as well as weathered worked flint chunks and flakes (31) and rarely pottery (2), whilst the recovered metalwork from the metal detector traverses across this consisted of copper-alloy (9), silver (1), lead (6) and iron (16) objects or object groups. Whilst most were fragments of scrap or small fragments of broken objects or

used nails, there were also several medieval buckles found alongside a Roman and a Medieval (13th century) coin. A single piece of iron slag was also recovered.

The excavation of the highest terrace along the northern edge of this site was the only area where significant natural was exposed. This revealed a number of sub-parallel curvilinear features which on excavation proved to be natural, and were probably run-off channels heading down-dip across the slope.

The only *in situ*. archaeology was revealed within the SE-NW trending drain and sump dug parallel to the south-western boundary and river frontage (Figure 4). Closest to the river bank within the area of the sump excavation were encountered two irregular – round, shallow, burnt flint and stone-filled pits (**F.1** and **F.3**) some 6m apart. Just 8m to the south-west of F.3 were another series of intercutting burnt flint and gravel/ silt-filled hollows and spreads (**F.4 – F.6**), whilst immediately adjacent to this (but at a slightly higher level) were found two similar spreads, **F.7** and **F.8**, perhaps also part of the same features. A series of later ditches crossed these. One of them, a SW-NE linear **F.2** (which heads off in a direction at approx. 90° away from the river) cut the edge of F.3 at the point where this was exposed within the sump (Figures 5a & 6a). Meanwhile, 15m to the south-east of here was a sub-parallel but slightly wider ditch **F.9** which truncated the edge of F.7 and F.8, whilst a metre beyond this to the south-east lay another ditch (**F.10**) oriented on a slightly different NNE-SSW axis (figure 5c). Both of the latter ditches produced single sherds of Roman pottery, whilst a piece of probable Roman tile came from the top of F.2.

Feature no.	F type	Shape/ orient	Context no.	Cut/fill/ layer	Dimensions L x W x D (m)	Context description	Finds	Period
			001	L	0.4-0.6 (D)	grey-brown colluvium	TL, PT	Post-Roman
			002	L	0.3-0.4 (D)	grey river silt with molluscs (alluvium)	TL, PT, BS	Late Roman
F.1	burnt flint pit	oval	003	F	0.15 (D)	sandy silt and weathered flint	BF	Neo – EBA?
F.1	burnt flint pit	oval	004	F	0.3 (D)	dk grey charcoal-rich sandy stony silt with cobbles	BF:BS(7 0:30)	Neo – EBA?
F.1	burnt flint pit	oval	005	F	0.15-0.25 (D)	basal broken unburnt to burnt cobbles in grey sandy-chalky silt	BF, BS	Neo – EBA?
F.1	burnt flint pit	oval	006	F	0.2-0.25 (D)	lens-like cobble-rich fill with burnt and calcined flint and stone in orange-brown sandy silt + little charcoal	BF, BS	Neo – EBA?
F.1	burnt flint pit	oval	009	F	0.2-0.25 (D)	looser gravel with less silt and occ weathered burnt (calcined) flint	BF	Neo – EBA?
F.1	burnt flint pit	oval + 'U' x-section	010	C	2 x 1.3 x 0.3-0.4	uneven sides and hollowed base : 'dish' shape		Neo – EBA?
F.1	burnt flint pit	oval	020	F	0.05 (D)	dark grey compact charcoal-ash silt with tiny fragments calcined flint	BF	Neo – EBA?
F.1	burnt flint pit	oval	021	F	0.05 (D)	similar to (020) but forms basal layer, with larger frags of calcined flint + unburnt gravel	BF	Neo – EBA?
F.1	burnt flint pit	oval + 'U' x-section	019	C	0.45 x 0.45 x 0.35	flat-bottom 'U' shape cut for central basin (later cut hollow) of F		Neo – EBA?
F.1	burnt flint pit	oval + 'dish' x-sectn	022	C	1.1 x 1 x 0.6	rounded 'dish' shape cut with concave irreg base (earlier hollow)		Neo – EBA?

Table 1: Context details for the riverside burnt flint/ burnt stone pit F.1

Feature no.	F type	Shape/ orient	Context no.	Cut/fill/ layer	Dimensions L x W x D (m)	Context description	Finds	Period
F.2	ditch	linear SW-NE	007	F	1m slot	grey-brown sandy silt with round flint + rare charcoal (backfill)		Roman?
F.2	ditch		044	C	1m slot 0.56(W) x 0.33(D)	steep sides + 'U' shape cut		Roman?
F.2	ditch	linear SW-NE	011	F	1m slot	grey-brown clayey sandy silt with flint cobbles and occ re-deposited BF	BF TL PT	Roman?
F.3	burnt flint 'pit'	oval NE-SW	012	F	0.3 (D)	mixed dk grey silty sand with pea gravel + c50mm BF + calcine fl + waterlain charc	BF FL	Neo – EBA?
F.3	BF 'pit'		043	C	0.35 x 0.3 x 0.3	irreg 'U' shape cut for (012)		Neo – EBA?
F.3	BF 'pit'		013	F	0.2 (D)	dark grey-blk silt full of small calcined fl + larger (50mm) unburnt fl	BF FL	Neo – EBA?
F.3	BF 'pit'		014	F	0.2 (D)	fine gravel silt with dk grey charcoal silt lens at top w unburnt fl + occ BF	BF BS	Neo – EBA?
F.3	BF 'pit'		015	F	0.15 (D)	basal lens of large redeposit fl cobbles + rare broken-up BF, with dk silt lens+ Fe pan	BF	Neo – EBA?
F.3	BF 'pit'		016	F	0.3 (D)	a band of broken-up unburnt flint debris on edge pit abut heat-fractured material		Neo – EBA?
F.3	BF 'pit'		017	F	0.2 (D)	lens sub-round unfrac fl + rare BF in orange-brwn sand	BF	Neo – EBA?
F.3	BF 'pit'	oval NE-SW + 'bowl' x-section	018	C	6 x 4 x 0.4	irreg 'bowl' shape x-section gently sloping sides (steeper N) + convex/ concave base		Neo – EBA?

Table 2: Context details for the burnt flint pit (F.3) and ditch (F.2)

Feature no.	F type	Shape/ orient	Context no.	Cut/fill/ layer	Dimensions L x W x D (m)	Context description	Finds	Period
F.9	ditch	NE-SW linear	037	F	0.25 (D)	sandy brown silt with mottled chalk, occ round fl, and lenses clayey silt, with snails + rare pot towards top	PT BN BF FL	Roman?
F.9	ditch	NE-SW 'U' shape x-section	038	C	1m slot : 2+ x 1.2 x 0.3	shallow sloping sides (gentle to N)+ concave/ convex base		Roman?
F.10	ditch	NNE-SSW linear	039	F	0.05 (D)	thin layer of grey-brown silt (flood river alluvium?) with pebbles fl, rare BF, chalk inclusions + molluscs	BF	Roman?
F.10	ditch	NNE-SSW	040	F	0.27 (D)	olive green – yellow brown – grey mottled sandy silt w occ chalk and fl pebbles	BN BF	Roman?
F.10	ditch	NNE-SSW	041	F	0.2 (D)	gritty sandy silt with chalk flecks + gravel lenses + stony base with silt laminae	PT BN	Roman?
F.10	ditch	NNE-SSW with 'V' x-section	042	C	1m slot: 2.5 x 1.2 x 0.38 (max)	asymmetric 'V' shape cut with steeper SE side + shallow concave to flat on NW side		Roman?

Table 3: Context details for the ditches F.9 and F.10

Feature no.	F type	Shape/ orient	Context no.	Cut/fill/ layer	Dimensions L x W x D (m)	Context description	Finds	Period
F.4	BF silt 'spread'	irregular	026	F	0.15 (D)	olive green – orange brown silt with rounded weathered fl + rare BF and calcined fl + waste flakes of worked FL	BF FL	Neo – EBA?
F.4	BF silt 'spread'	irregular	027	C	>2 x 2 x 0.25	uncertain shape to cut (only part exposed) but v shallow: cut by F.5 + F.6		Neo – EBA?
F.5	BF silt 'spread'	uncertain	023	F	0.2 (D)	mid-dk grey matrix support silt with small 20-40mm flint clasts and moderate BF (<20mm). Some lens Fe-rich silt and worked FL at base	FL BF	Neo – EBA?
F.5	BF silt 'spread'		024	F	0.1 (D)	pale silt with large weathered fl, but rare BF	FL BF	Neo – EBA?
F.5	BF silt 'spread'	shallow hollow	025	C	2.4 x 1 x 0.25	shallow hollow or water-filled depression		Neo – EBA?
	buried soil?		028	L	uncertain	orange yellow – olive green silt with gravel + flint flakes on top: occupation horizon?	FL	Neo – EBA?
F.6	BF 'pit'	oval irregular	045	F	0.1 (D)	sandy silt with occ large cobbles of weathered flint		Neo – EBA?
F.6	BF 'pit'		029	F	0.08 (D)	stony fill with a mix of weathered + BF, increased calcined flint	BF	Neo – EBA?
F.6	BF 'pit'		030	F	0.25 (D)	mix angular + rounded gravel fresh/weathered No charcoal. BF + rare calcined + worked FL within silt lens	BF FL	Neo – EBA?
F.6	BF 'pit'	uncertain x-section	031	C	5.5 x 1 x 0.3	uncertain edges w gently sloping sides + flat/uneven base	BF + FL	Neo – EBA?
F.7	BF silt 'spread'	uncertain	032	F	0.1 (D)	mid-light grey stony silt with weathered flint towards base + occas BF (poss same as F.4)	BF	Neo – EBA?
F.7	BF silt 'spread'	uncertain x-section	033	C	2 x 1.5 x 0.1	uncertain edges but with gentle sloping side to S		Neo – EBA?
F.8	BF silt 'spread'	uncertain	034	F	0.2 (D)	light brown-olive green mottled sandy silt with occ gravel + rare BF/ calcined fl	BF	Neo – EBA?
F.8	BF silt 'spread'	uncertain x-section	035	C	1.4 x 2 x 0.2	mod gentle sloping side to S and concave base		Neo – EBA?
	buried soil?		036	L	1.5+ x 2+ x 0.2+	light brown sandy silt underlying dark silt: has reddened/weathered surface with scatters of worked FL	FL	Neo – EBA?

Table 4: Context details for the burnt flint and silt spreads (F.4 – F.8)

Discussion

Perhaps the most interesting result of this investigation has been the discovery of further evidence for the utilisation of burnt flint along this river frontage at Babraham during the Neolithic/ Early Bronze Age, in this case as discreet burnt flint and burnt stone filled pits which may have been used for cooking. Close by were a number of silty gravel-filled hollows and silt spreads containing much smaller amounts of burnt and calcined (water quenched) flint. These also contained worked flint, particularly within their basal fills, which given the higher incidence of prepared flint chunks, flakes and blades present, might have been the remains of washed-out burnt flint mounds and occupation horizons. The latter model is supported perhaps by the preservation of 'buried soils', the paucity of other cultural material within these being fairly typical of burnt mound aceramic sites (see Crowson 2004; Beadsmoore 2005).

The discovery of a flake from a Neolithic polished flint axe within the fill of the silt spread F.5 (see Billington this report) was an interesting find which might have helped with the dating of this feature. However, the majority of the flint recovered from these burnt flint and silt spreads has been characterised instead as 'Late Mesolithic/ Early Neolithic' in style. It is perfectly possible therefore that we are looking at two successive but quite distinct phases of activity associated with flint procurement and burning. For example, no obviously Mesolithic worked flint was recovered from pits F.1 and F.3, the latter being distinctively different enough to be classed as separate features more akin to the Late Neolithic/ Early Bronze flint mounds investigated at the Babraham Riverside site (Timberlake & Armour 2006). This distinction between primary utilised and redeposited flint is likewise highlighted within the flint assemblages recovered from nearby features such as those examined during the Phase 2 trench evaluation (i.e. the large hollow F.105) (Collins 2012a). The latter flints were similarly mixed, ranging in date from the Mesolithic – Iron Age, and mostly interpreted as non *in situ*. flint working, with the flints having been transported colluvially downslope to accumulate within buried soils forming in some of the natural hollows and depressions. This same phenomenon may or may not have been happening here on a micro-scale within the prehistoric features F.4 - F.8.

Careful excavation of the features F.1 and F.3 have afforded us some insight into how these burnt flint 'cooking' pits may have been used. In both cases we see evidence for a central water-filled pit (between 400–700mm wide and 300-500mm deep), though in neither case was this clay lined; rather this seems to have been sealed by the repeated accumulation of charcoal and ash-rich silty sediment present within its base. Close examination of F.3 suggests the following process and sequence: (1) Excavation of a quarry pit (1-2m+ diameter) for the extraction of water-rolled flint and stone nodules (latter up to 10% of the total); (2) The larger of these flint nodules were then broken up (hammered) into pieces of about 50mm diameter; (3) These flint (and stone) lumps were then burnt within an open fire, either within or on the edge of the main pit; (4) The burnt flint/ stone was then scraped out of the embers of the fire and dragged over to the edge of the central water-filled basin ([19] + [12]); (5) The un-fractured hot flint was then dropped piecemeal into the water for the purposes of cooking (perhaps using wrapped foodstuffs (O'Kelly 1954; Wood 2006)); (6) The fractured flint and stone would then have been raked out and dumped inside of hollows or within dumped lenses around the edge. No animal bone was recovered from any of these cooking pits, just a single piece of cow bone from the burnt flint-filled silt spread F.5. This may however be an issue of preservation.

The survival of these features so close to the current river bank seems fortuitous, given that only a short distance downstream of here at the Riverside site the floodplain was wide and the river course braided with rapidly migrating channels. As a result of this many of the burnt flint pit/ mounds will have been damaged or eroded away, the excavated ones probably surviving as partly re-deposited features. In contrast to this the course Granta within this part of its reach has migrated little over the last 4000 years, due perhaps to its deeply incised nature and also the underlying outcrop of Chalk (Melbourn Rock).

As regards the later archaeology, none of the three probable Romano-British ditches sampled seem to have been encountered within the trenches of the previous two archaeological evaluations. In fact, the Romano-British ditches F.102-F.104

excavated in 2012 during the Phase 2 evaluations all lie parallel to the river and seem to run WNW-ENE. The most likely scenario therefore is that F.2 and F.9 are both field boundaries (and/or drains) which probably meet ditch F.104 at right angles, and from there run down to the river. However, ditch F.10 may well be an earlier or later phase boundary, the exact relationship with the adjacent ditch F.9 being uncertain. Most likely though the presence of field boundaries immediately adjacent to and also at right angles to the river suggests the existence here of divided-up water meadows. Beyond this we can say very little about the Roman occupation of this part of the site, except to state that it appears to be distant from the fringe of the main Babraham settlement.

The metal detecting survey of the topsoil within the area to the north-east of the river frontage proved to be interesting with respect of the surprising richness of residual Early Medieval finds (mostly 12th - 14th century metalwork). As suggested by Hall (see this report) this would appear to indicate an area of Medieval activity near by. However, this might be interpreted instead as being redeposited metal waste or losses within midden that was taken from the Medieval village of Babraham and then strewn over the riverside fields as part of manuring activities.

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APPENDIX

Worked and burnt flint

Lawrence Billington

Quantification

A total of **88** worked flints and **5.636 kg** of unworked burnt flint was recovered both as surface finds and as excavated material from the site (Table 1). The majority of the worked assemblage was collected as surface finds and from the excavation of several spreads and silt rich hollows, with smaller numbers recovered as a residual element within later cut features. The majority of the unworked flint came from two probable riverside Neolithic/ Early Bronze Age burnt stone and flint pits (F. 1 and F. 3).

Feature	ditches			Pits		silt hollows/ spreads				surface finds	totals
	2	9	10	1	3	4	5	6	8		
chip										1	1
irregular waste							1	1	5	5	12
flake		3	2		3		5	4	12	15	44
narrow flake							1	1	1		3
blade						1	3			4	8
bladelet							2	1			3
blade like flake									1	3	4
flake from polished flint axe							1				1
thumbnail scraper										1	1
retouched flake										1	1
irregular core										1	1
single platform core									1		1
multiple platform core										1	1
core fragment										1	1
tested nodule				1						5	6
total worked		3	2	1	3	1	13	7	20	38	88
burnt unworked flint no.	7	1		208	34		6	7	8		271
burnt unworked flint weight (g)	272	10		3374	1700		95	82	103		5636

Table 5: Quantification of the flint assemblage.

Raw Materials and condition

The entire assemblage is made up of flint, generally fine grained and of good quality although the nodules appear to have fairly frequent flaws which may have caused cores to split unpredictably during working. The material is closely comparable to flint recovered from earlier stages of work at Babraham, (e.g. Billington..) and appears to represent flint nodules and cobbles recovered from the local gravel deposits.

The condition of the worked flint is varied, many pieces have suffered minor edge damage and rounding consistent with a degree of post depositional disturbance. This is especially the case for pieces recovered as surface finds or from the fills of later cut features. Cortication ('patination') was relatively common, occurring on 30% of the

worked flints. This proportion is closely comparable to that from the large assemblage recovered from excavations at Babraham in 2011 (Billington in Collins 2012) and similarly appears to have some degree of chronological significance with probable Mesolithic pieces invariably displaying cortication of some degree.

Surface Finds

A total of 38 worked flints were recovered as surface finds. These are obviously chronologically mixed and are varied in terms of technology, condition and raw material. The assemblage is dominated by waste material in the form of unretouched removals and cores. There appears to be an emphasis on the earlier stages of core reduction as evidenced by several minimally worked or tested nodules and decortication flakes. The earliest activity is represented by seven fine blade based pieces of Mesolithic or earlier Neolithic date. These include fine prismatic, corticated blades and somewhat more robust and uncorticated examples and it is likely that they include both Mesolithic and earlier Neolithic pieces. Evidence for later activity takes the form of more generalised flake based waste. Much of this probably relates to the less diagnostic elements of Mesolithic and earlier Neolithic core reduction but some is likely to reflect somewhat later activity, from the later Neolithic to at least the Early Bronze Age. Two retouched pieces were collected as surface finds. One of these has been classified as a thumbnail scraper although it lacks the distinctive invasive retouch which is often characteristic of this form of scraper. The second piece is a large flake with abrupt, crudely executed lateral retouch. Thumbnail scrapers are a characteristic element of Early Bronze Age assemblages whilst the expedient nature of the other retouched flake also suggests a Bronze Age date.

Spreads and Hollows

A total of 41 worked flints were recovered from silt rich spreads and hollows. The assemblage from these features is closely comparable to the material derived from surface collection although it is generally in better condition. Earlier Neolithic and Mesolithic flintwork is well represented, most clearly by eight fine blade based removals. A flake struck from a Neolithic polished flint axe was also recovered from F. 5. Later flintwork is represented by a variety of hard hammer struck flakes and cores. No retouched tools were recovered from these contexts and, as with the surface finds, there is a clear emphasis on the earlier stages of core reduction with a high proportion of cortical flakes, although cores are less common.

Pits

Two pits contained relatively large quantities of burnt, unworked flint. F. 3 contained 34 fragments weighing 1700g and F. 1 contained 208 fragments weighing 3374g. None of the burnt flint showed any traces of working prior to being burnt although both pits contained a small quantity of unburnt worked flint, a tested nodule from F. 1 and three small flake fragments from F. 3.

Ditches

Five un-retouched flint flakes were recovered as a residual element within ditches F. 9 and 10.

Discussion

The worked flint from the excavations is closely comparable to the much larger assemblages recovered from earlier phases of work at Babraham, which represent the procurement and working of flint nodules obtained from the local gravel terrace and periglacial features during the Mesolithic and earlier Neolithic with some evidence for continued activity in the later Neolithic and Early Bronze Age (Armour 2007, Collins 2012). The 2013 assemblage, whilst relatively small, is an important addition to the existing evidence for flintworking in the locality, demonstrating that this activity extended into this area of the site. The assessment report for the 2011 assemblage emphasised the importance of the assemblages from Babraham for improving our understanding of the routine acquisition of lithic resources in the Mesolithic and Early Neolithic of the region and the assemblage discussed here should be included in any further assessment or publication of the prehistory of the site.

Roman pottery

Simon Timberlake, Matthew Collins & Richard Newman

Four sherds of pottery (weight 56g) were recovered during the archaeological monitoring and recording of this site; two sherds of which (<041> and <049>) were picked up following the topsoil strip and during metal detecting, the other two each coming from SW-NE trending ditches (F.9 and F.10) exposed during the digging of a shallow trench for a drain leading to the small flood compensation pond.

All that has been provided here in this report are the spot dates and simple descriptions for the pot, with <041> and <049> more certainly being Roman, and <027> and <032> being probably Roman in date.

<041> SF 106. 1 sherd (22g). A fragment of the base of a shallow dish (?). Coarseware composed of a light brown fine grained sandy-micaceous fabric, perhaps with traces of a slip. Fairly weathered.

<049> SF 117b. 1 body sherd (6g). Similar fabric to above, but less micaceous. With a faintly sooted exterior. Less weathered.

<027> F.9 (037). 1 body sherd (8g). A thin and fairly well fired pinkish-yellow sandy micaceous fabric (2-3mm thick). Moderately weathered and abraded.

<032> F.10 (041). Two adjoining rim sherds (18g). Composed of a pinkish (oxidised) coarse shelly fabric with no reduced interior (c.5mm thick). Fresh and unabraded condition.

Tile

Simon Timberlake

Three pieces of terracotta tile weighing 244g were recovered from the features excavated during the construction of the flood compensation pond close to the river's edge. All seem likely to be fragments of roof tiles, although only one of them is likely to have come from the fill of the Roman ditch (F.2). Probably within all these contexts, however, this material is redeposited.

<005> F.2 (011). Weight 222g. Two fragments of tile, the thicker (17mm) fragment (a) being part of the corner of a flat roof tile (170g) with one worn (upper) and one smooth (lower) surface, the exterior

weathered face having a combed groove running across it. The smaller fragment (b) is of an altogether different type; thinner (12mm) with a brighter red exterior and a reduced grey interior (46g). Lying upon the surface of the infilled SW-NE aligned Roman (?) ditch, tile (a) seems much more likely to have come from the fill itself, therefore to be Roman, whilst tile (b) may have been derived from the colluvium above, suggesting this could be Postmed.

<002> [F.8] (01) Weight 22g. An abraded fragment of red tile similar to (b) above, and composed of a silty-sandy terracotta type fabric. This piece comes from the overlying colluvium layer rather than the actual fill of F.8, and is most likely, as a consequence, Postmedieval.

Metalwork

Andrew Hall

Methodology

During the investigations, metal detecting was employed to aid in the retrieval of small finds from the stripped area and from any exposed archaeological features. The detector used was a XP ADX150, set with limited discrimination to ensure the retrieval of iron artefacts.

Results

The recovered assemblage includes 33 artefacts: one of silver, nine copper alloy, five of lead and the remaining 18 made of iron. Condition of the non-ferrous finds is excellent with little degradation to the copper alloy; however, the iron artefacts are unsurprisingly in very poor condition. A description of these objects is provided within the catalogue below:

Silver

<080> SF.115. A silver hammered long cross penny of Henry III (1216-72) portrait with sceptre. Flan slightly bent, but otherwise in excellent unclipped condition. Diameter 19.6mm, weight 2g.

Copper alloy

<079> SF.114. A cast copper-alloy spur terminal with two holes and small triangular projection. Most likely of early post-medieval date. Weight 4g.

<082> SF.117. A cast copper alloy ring of 22.6mm diameter. The frame measures 3mm in width and is of rectangular cross section. Of unknown function, but possibly part of a bridle, harness or other such horse paraphernalia. Medieval or early post-medieval in date. Weight 3g.

<085> SF.123. One side of a folded sheet copper alloy buckle plate of rectangular shape with plate recessed for frame and pin (now missing). The plate is pierced for five copper alloy rivets, with two surviving in place. The upper surface is decorated with two incised horizontal lines. The plate measures 17.6mm in width by 32.5mm in length. Similar buckle plates have been found in London from deposits dating from the 12th to 14th centuries (Egan and Pritchard 2002:113)

<086> SF.124. A cast copper alloy strap loop of rectangular / trapezoidal form (loop to hold down loose straps), with internal projections. Examples are recorded from excavations in London (*ibid.*:234) and these close parallels date from the late 12th to the 14th century. The frame measures 30 x 20mm and weighs 6g.

<087> SF.125a. A tiny cast copper alloy buckle with pin intact. The buckle frame is of rectangular / slight trapezoidal shape (tapering to one end). Comparison with published examples found in York suggest that the buckle plate is missing and that a 14th century date is appropriate (Ottaway and Rogers 2002:2893). Measuring 13.6 x 11.2mm and weighing 2g.

<097> SF.144. A small bronze Roman coin (*nummus*) of 14mm diameter. Most likely 4th century in date. Weight 3g.

<100> SF.147. A fragment of a cast copper alloy object. Of unknown function. The fragment has one rounded face and a flattened inside face (elongated d-shaped). Measuring 31 x 11 x 11mm and weighing 23g. Of unknown date.

<103> SF.151. A complete cast copper alloy d-shaped buckle with pin intact. It is difficult to say whether this buckle had a plate or not. No surface decoration is visible. Parallels are published from London and date from the 13th to 14th centuries. (Egan and Pritchard 2002: 89). The frame measures 36 x 22mm and the buckle weighs 8g.

<107> SF.155. A cast copper alloy buckle frame (incomplete) of oval shape with an ornate outside edge with four knobs. The pin is missing and frame only partially intact. Once more London examples suggest a date for this buckle within the 12th -14th century range. Near identical examples both with and without associated plates are illustrated within Egan and Pritchard's corpus (*ibid.*:73 and 77).

Lead

Within this group of five lead objects are two possible pot plugs / repairs, which could possibly be Roman in date.

<102> SF 149. A cast lead pot repair of sub-circular shape, 25mm diameter, 21g.

<088> SF126a. A cast lead repair of crescent shape, 44 x 20 x 11mm. Weight 50g.

The remaining three objects <078, 081, 091> are all undiagnostic scrap or casting blobs, and therefore have no date ascribed.

Iron

<084> SF.122. A forged iron hook measuring 23 x 30mm. Weight 6g. Undated.

<090> SF.134. A large rectangular headed nail with rectangular section tapering shank of 80mm in length. The head measures 60mm x 50mm. This is most likely a structural piece of ironwork. Weight 170g.

<095> SF.141. A sheet of iron, triangular shaped, with two holes at the corners. Measuring 75 x 75 x 1mm. Weight 50g.

The following catalogue entries are all iron nails in poor condition, often fragmentary: <092, 093, 096, 098, 101, 104, 105, 106, 108, 109>. They range in size from 58mm to 25mm in length. They appear to all be hand forged with irregular circular shaped heads and square section shanks.

In addition, there are four fragments of iron horse shoes,(<083, 089, 094, 099>)all pierced with rectangular shaped countersunk nail holes. Dating of shoes from heavily corroded fragments is problematic so a wide range of 14th to 17th century is suggested.

Discussion

This is an interesting group of finds, which, with the exception of the Roman coin, dates to the Medieval and early post-medieval period. Of particular note is the 13th century silver penny in pristine condition, and the group of half a dozen or so 12th to 14th century dress accessories, again all in excellent condition. This assemblage clearly suggests some focus of activity at this time. It adds to a growing corpus of finds of this period from the various investigations around the Babraham campus, most likely relating to the pre-existing settlement.

Iron slag

Simon Timberlake

A single piece of weathered and abraded iron slag (<068> SF 156) weighing **114 g** was recovered as a surface find following the topsoil strip and subsequent metal detecting survey. This particular piece was strongly magnetic and appeared to be a lump of spongy iron, perhaps part of an iron bloom, or alternatively a fragment of free melted iron detached from a smithing hearth base (SHB). The presence of a non-magnetic clay lump accreted to the bottom of this suggests the latter i.e. that this is part of the clay hearth lining fused to a SHB. Within the matrix of this can be seen the impressions of the charcoal inclusions.

The high iron content (c.40% Fe) of this supports the idea that this might be Roman smithing activity, yet the absence of any other slag finds and the abraded nature of this suggests that we are looking at dispersed and redeposited material, the most likely origin for this material being several hundred metres up slope and to the south of this, towards the edge of the confirmed Roman settlement.

Burnt stone

Simon Timberlake

A total of c. **3.49 kg** of burnt stone was recovered from four different features, the vast majority of this (c.2.3 kg) coming from a single Neolithic/ Early Bronze Age (?) burnt flint pit (F.1) found lying closest (4.5m distant) to the current river bank. In general these burnt stones form a very small part (<10%) of the content of these burnt flint-filled pits (F.1, F.3 & F.5), and one can only assume therefore that stone was not preferentially selected from the river terrace gravels for this purpose, unlike the typical practice we find in the later Early-Middle Bronze when glacially-transported cobble stone had become the material of choice for use in cooking pits. However, most of this material shows clear evidence of having been burnt and immersed in water when hot – the effects of which include cracking and fragmentation, discolouration (both bleaching and reddening of the stone), and disaggregation of the sandstone grains (i.e. loss of cement and crumbling).

Table 6: Quantification of burnt stone

Cat	Feature	Context	Nos. frags	Size (mm)	Weight (kg)	Geology	Notes
003	F.1	04	7	60 - 110	2.296	white fine gr orthoquartz sst (Carbonif) + yellow sstn + BF	large cobbles from BS (max 0.58 kg)
013	F.3	13	3	60-70	0.44	yellowish LGS? + metaquartzite + dolerite	
010	F.3	14	3	30-40	0.076	soft yellow orthoquartz sst	
019	F.5	23	1	120	0.45	yellow-white med gr orthoquartz (Jur-Cret) sstn	
035	F.10	41	1	60	0.12	yellow-white micac sstn	
012	F.3	17	1	55	0.1	soft white Jurass-Cret sstn	
006	F.2	11	1	20	0.012	pinkish sstn	

Faunal remains

Vida Rajkovača

A total of six bone elements were recovered with a combined weight of **246g**, from four features and collected from the surface. The good preservation allowed for all six specimens to be identified to species level.

Sheep/ goat was represented by an unfused proximal tibia from F.2 and a fragment of pelvis from F.9. Cow was positively identified based on loose teeth, both maxillary molars, collected from the surface, and a heavily eroded 2nd phalanx from F.5 and proximal metacarpal from F.10.

Taxon	<i>F.2 Roman SW-NE ditch</i>	<i>F.5 Bronze Age? spread of BS+BF</i>	<i>F.9 Roman SW-NE ditch</i>	<i>F.10 Roman SSW-NNE ditch</i>	<i>SF.121 topsoil</i>	<i>SF.127a topsoil</i>	Total NISP
Cow	.	1	.	1	1	1	4
Sheep/ goat	1	.	1	.	.	.	2
Total	1	1	1	1	1	1	6

Table 7: Number of Identified Specimens for all species from all features.

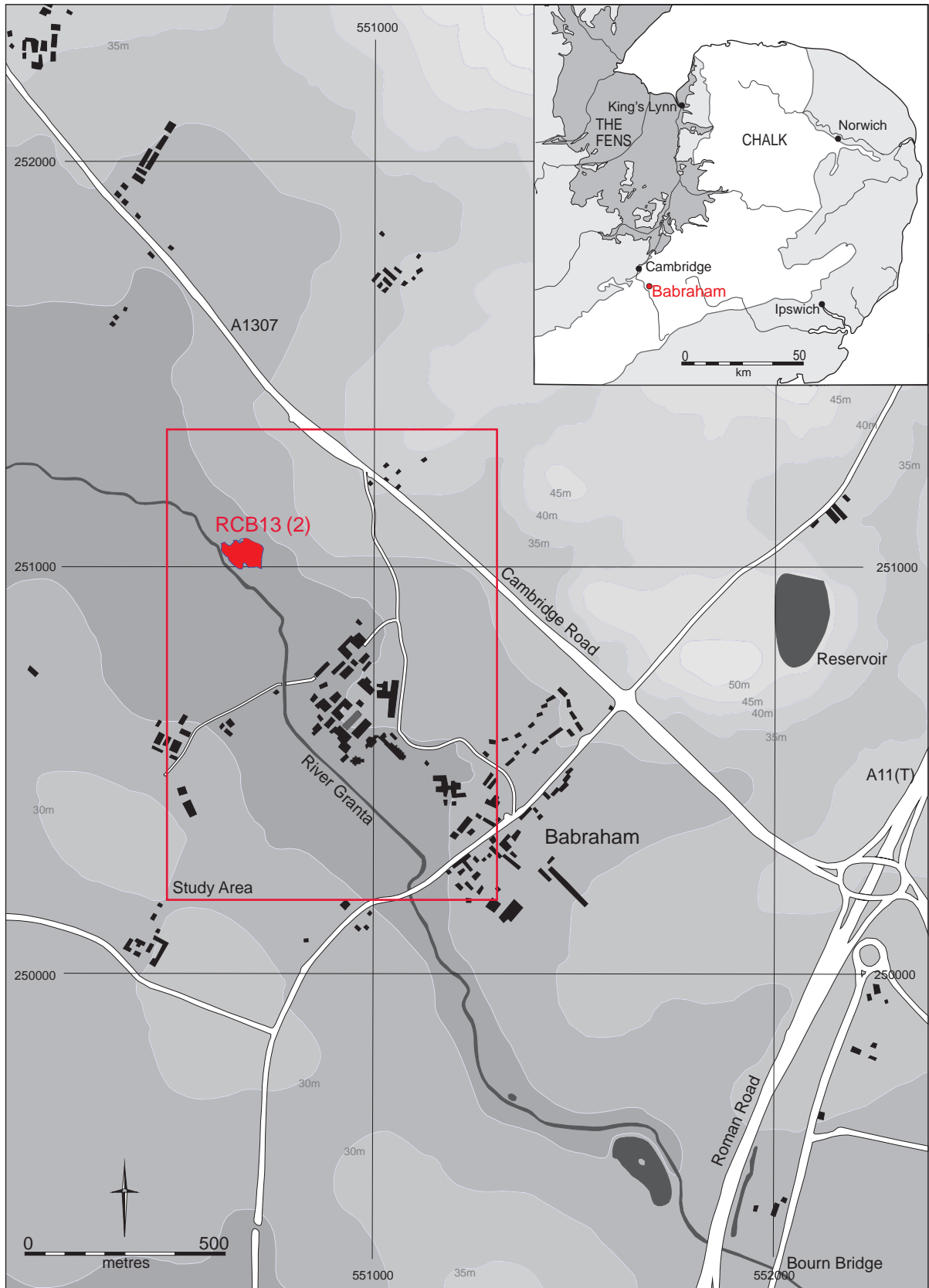


Figure 1. Location map

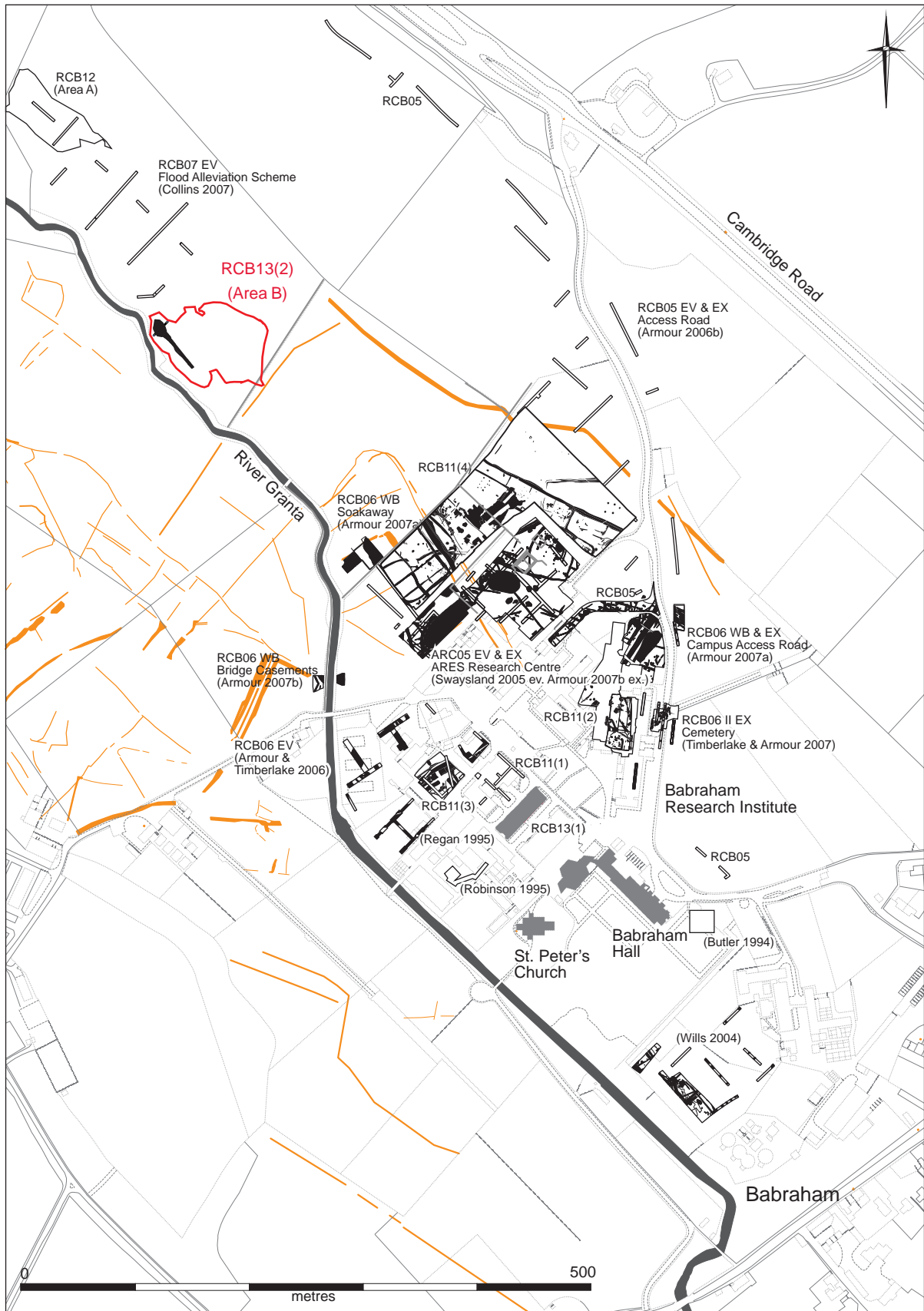


Figure 2. Location of current excavation (red) showing previous excavations in the area and croppmarks (in orange)

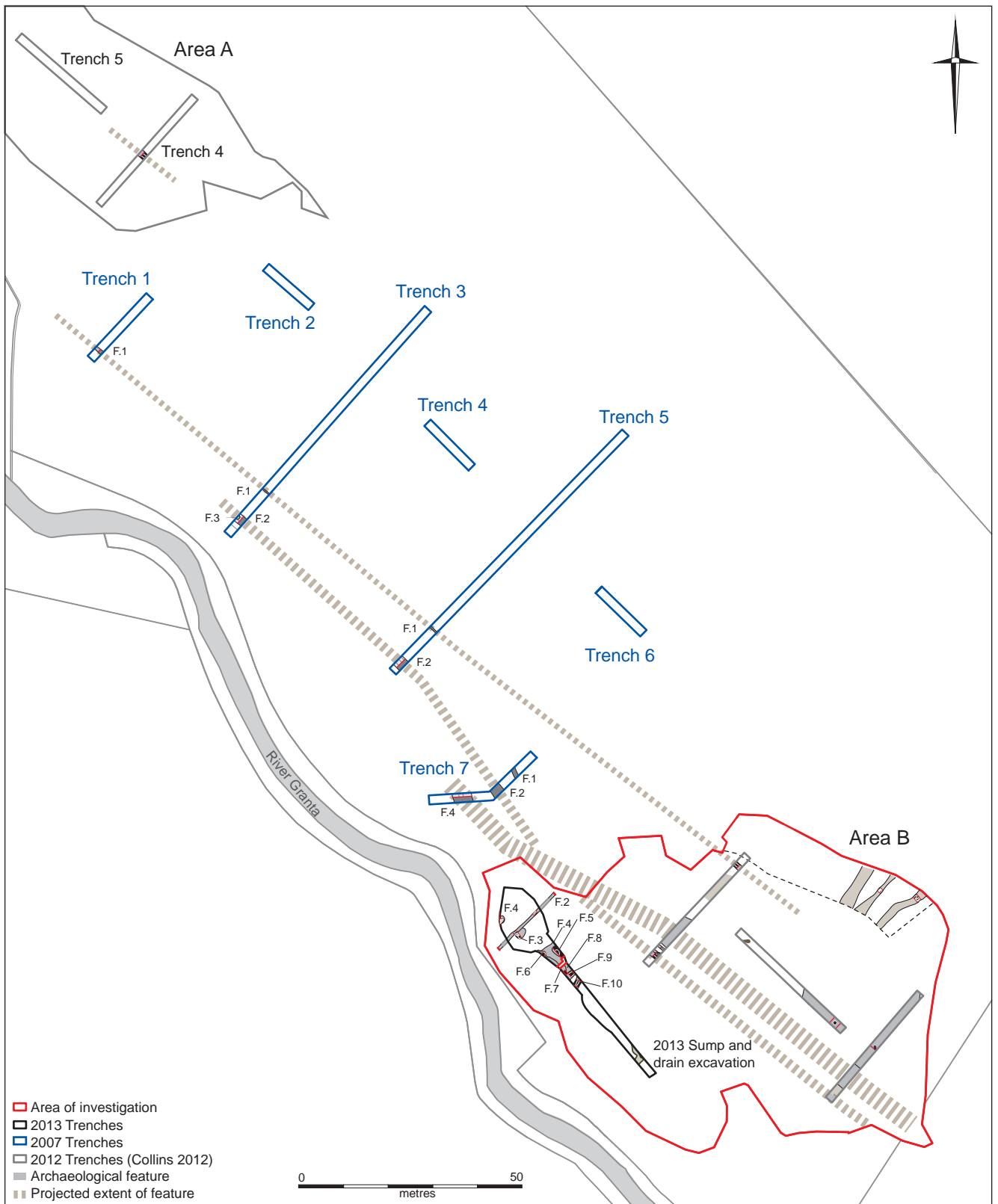


Figure 3. Plan of archaeological features

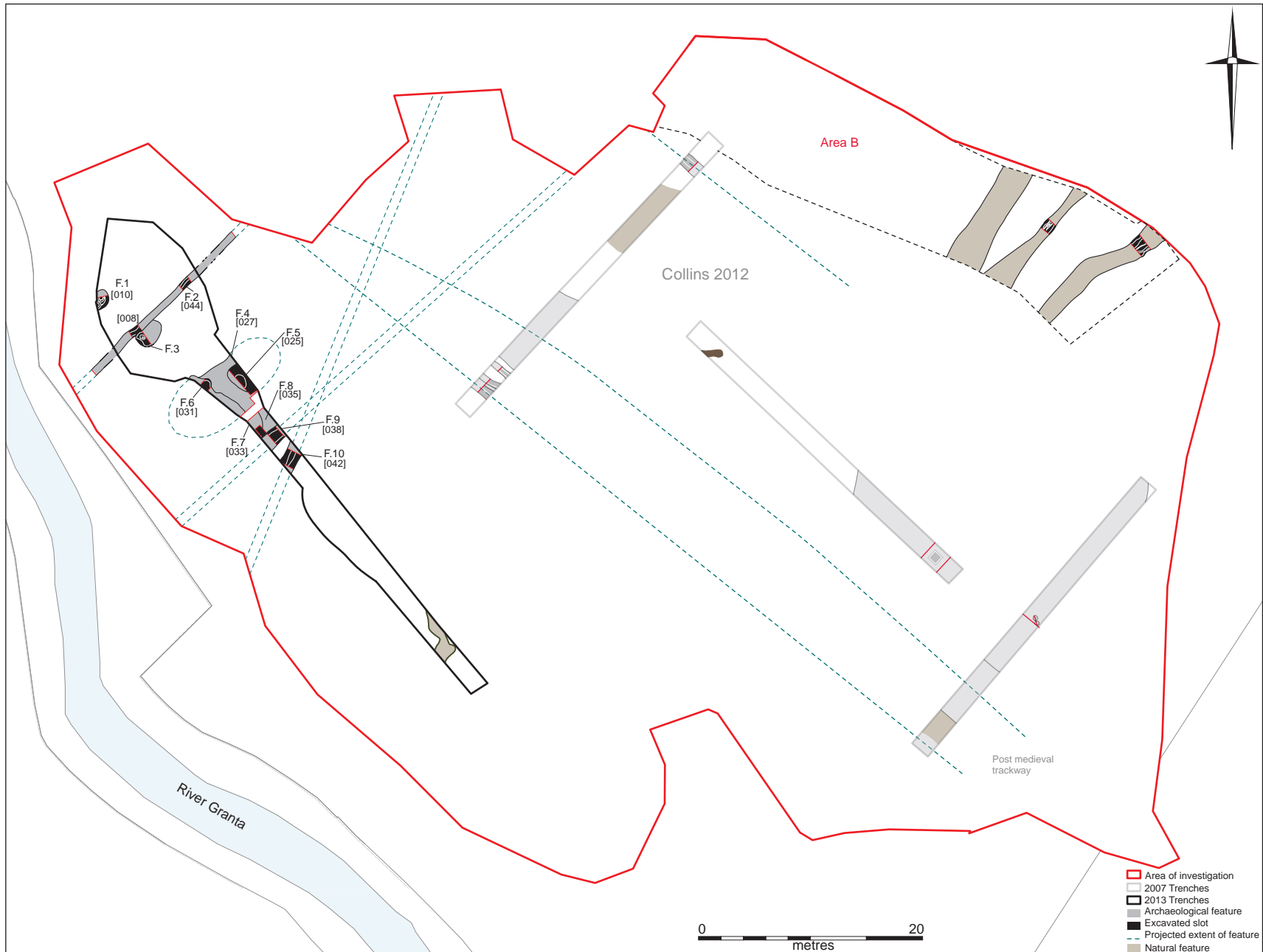


Figure 4. Plan of archaeological features

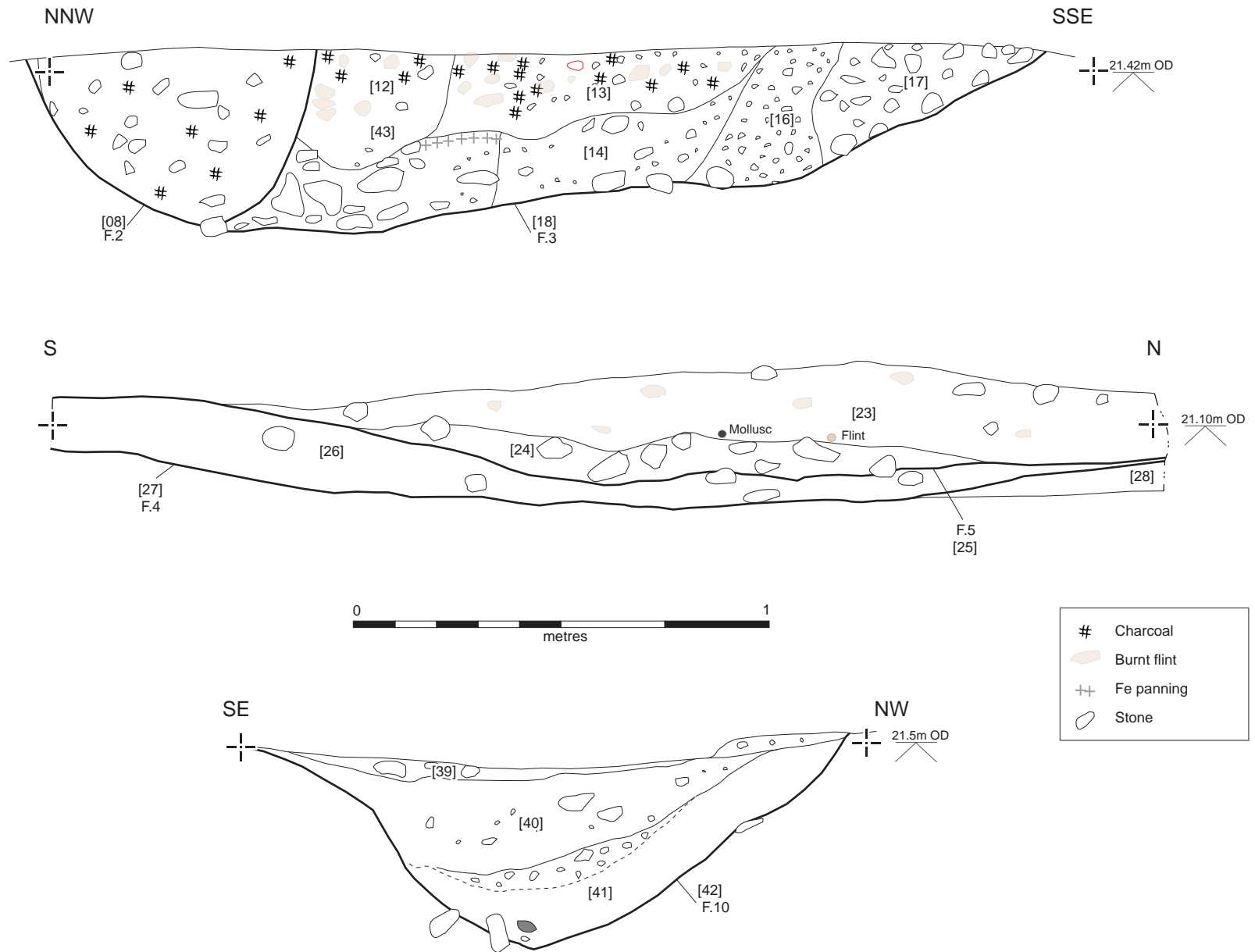


Figure 5.

5a. SW- facing section through burnt flint-filled pit F.3 and cross-cutting ditch F.2.

5b. NE -facing section through silt and burnt flint-filled spread F.5 and F.4.

5c. N-facing section through Roman (?) ditch F.10.



6a.



6b.

Figure 6a. Photograph of burnt flint pit F.3 cut by Roman(?) ditch F.2.
Figure 6b. Photograph of Section through burnt stone / flint pit F.1 in side of sump excavation.



7a.



7b.

Figure 7a. Photograph of North East facing section ditch F.9.
Figure 7b. Photograph of North facing section ditch F.10.

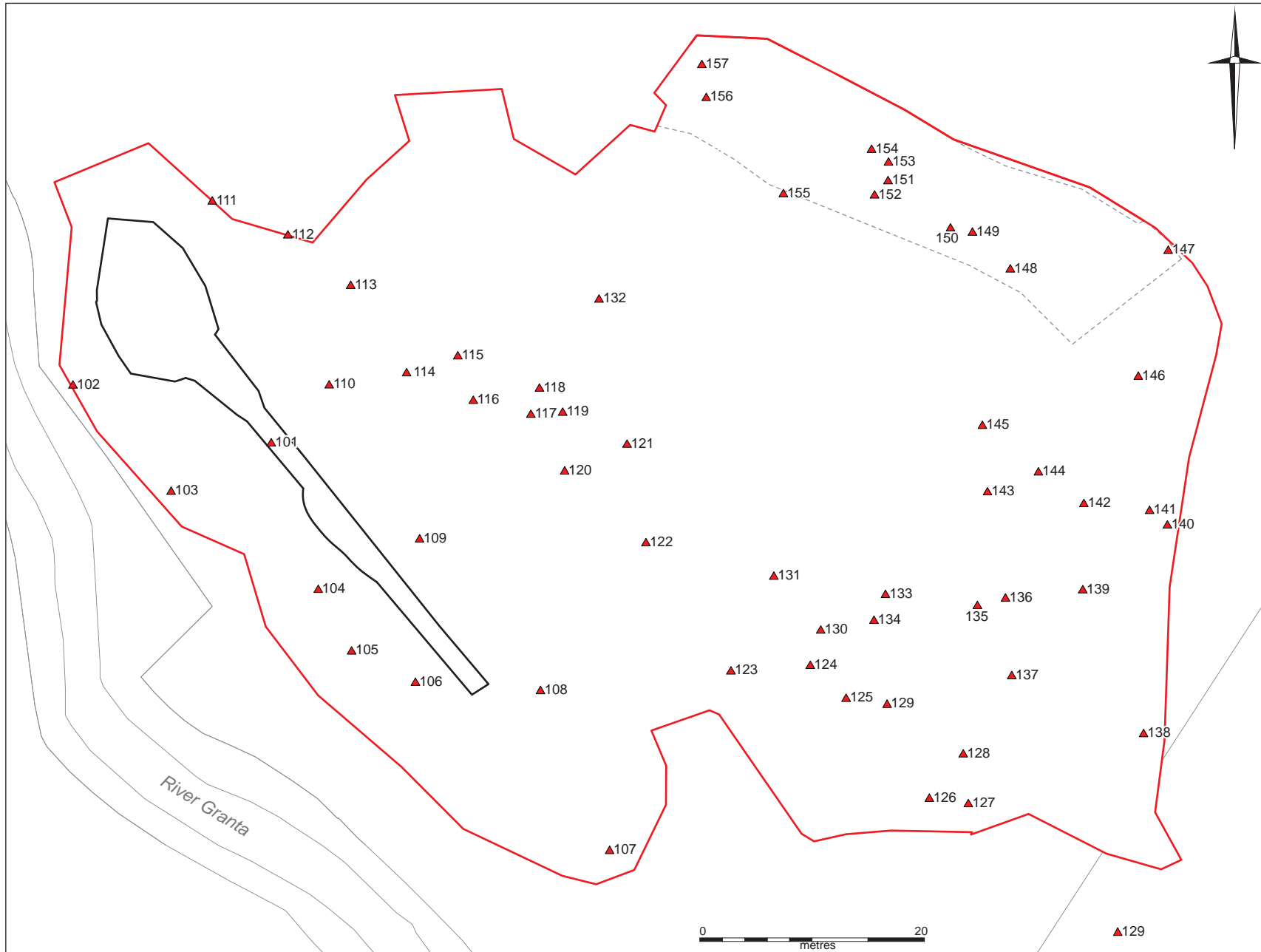


Figure 8. Location of small finds (inc. metal detected finds) within partially stripped topsoil of Area B.

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OASIS ID: cambridg3-164134

Project details

Project name	Babraham Research Campus,Cambridge: Flood Compensation Scheme Phase 2: Archaeological monitoring 2013
Short description of the project	In July 2013 the Cambridge Archaeological Unit carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during excavations for the second phase of the Flood Compensation Scheme at the Babraham Research Campus. This involved a topsoil and partial subsoil strip of two areas which lie close to the river frontage, thus 200m to the north-west of the archaeologically excavated R and D Land, and beyond the area of the main Roman settlement. No archaeology was revealed in Area A (0.28 ha), which in places was stripped down to the underlying chalk, but in Area B (0.39 ha) at the south end, a number of amorphous burnt flint spreads and pits of probable Neolithic - Early Bronze Age date were found during the digging of a balance pond and drain. These features were cut by a series of three narrow NW-SE to SSE-NNW trending ditches of probable Roman date. To the north-east of this excavation a field walk and metal detecting survey of the stripped topsoil revealed an interesting but mixed-up assemblage of material which included Mesolithic - Early Bronze Age flint, minor amounts of Roman pottery, lead scrap and a coin, plus a slightly better assemblage of Medieval metalwork including a well-preserved Henry III silver penny, a number of 12th-14th century copper-alloy buckles and straps, and a few Postmedieval - modern finds. The shallow depth of necessary excavation within this area meant that the natural flint-filled hollow and other features revealed during the trench evaluation in March 2012 were not re-examined.
Project dates	Start: 08-07-2013 End: 30-07-2013
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	RCB13(2) - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	ECB3877 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Grassland Heathland 2 - Undisturbed Grassland
Monument type	BURNT FLINT AND STONE PITS AND SPREADS Neolithic
Monument type	BURNT FLINT AND STONE PITS AND SPREADS Early Bronze Age
Monument type	DITCH Roman
Significant Finds	FRAGMENT POLISHED AXE Neolithic

Significant Finds	WORKED FLINT Mesolithic
Significant Finds	WORKED FLINT Early Bronze Age
Significant Finds	BURNT FLINT AND STONE Neolithic
Significant Finds	TILE Roman
Significant Finds	POTTERY Roman
Significant Finds	COIN Roman
Significant Finds	COIN Medieval
Significant Finds	COPPER ALLOY BUCKLE Medieval
Significant Finds	LEAD CASTING WASTE Roman
Methods & techniques	"Fieldwalking","Metal Detectors","Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Service infrastructure (e.g. sewage works, reservoir, pumping station, etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE BABRAHAM Babraham Research Campus
Postcode	CB22 3AT
Study area	0.67 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 50681 51008 52 0 52 08 11 N 000 12 07 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 22.00m Max: 24.30m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Emma Beadsmoore
Project director/manager	Emma Beadsmoore
Project supervisor	Simon Timberlake
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Babraham Bioscience Technologies Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
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recipient	
Physical Archive ID	RCB13(2)
Physical Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics","Environmental","Metal","Worked stone/lithics","other"
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Digital Archive ID	RCB13(2)
Digital Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics","Metal","Stratigraphic","Survey","Worked stone/lithics","other"
Digital Media available	"GIS","Images raster / digital photography","Spreadsheets","Survey","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Paper Archive ID	RCB13(2)
Paper Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics","Environmental","Metal","Stratigraphic","Survey","Worked stone/lithics","other"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Map","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section","Survey "

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Babraham Research Campus: Flood Compensation Scheme, Phase 2 Archaeological monitoring and recording July 2013
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Other bibliographic details	no.1194
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