JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD WALKING SURVEY

AT

LAND OFF TOPSHAM ROAD,

EXETER, DEVON

(NGR SX 957 894 *centred*)

On behalf of

Dart Properties Ltd

March 2009

REPORT FOR	Dart Properties Ltd C/o Savills Wessex House Priors Walk East Borough Wimbourne BH21 1PB
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services conducted an archaeological field-walking survey of the proposed development site, from 5th – 9th January 2009. A previous evaluation involving trenching had been conducted in the vicinity from 29thSeptember until 31st October 2008.

The survey located 287 mostly Bronze Age flint artefacts based on a 5% sample of the area in less than ideal conditions. The extrapolation to total coverage indicates a major scatter of material, which corresponds quite closely to features identified in the evaluation.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location *(Figure 1)*

The site is located to the south west of Exeter, lying to the west of the M5 motorway, to the northeast of Topsham Road, and to the south and east of the former Royal Naval Stores Depot. The site is centred on NGR SX 957894. The site covers an area of approximately 34.4 hectares, and is bisected by a watercourse running roughly north – south. From the site entrance adjacent to Topsham Road the land rises gradually from the central watercourse to the northwest and northeast.

The geology of the area is dominated by New Red Sandstone formations believed to be late Permian in date (250 to 260 million years before present; Edwards and Scrivener 1999). The earliest is the Heavitree Brecchia, which is thought to have formed under hot desert conditions (Edmonds, McKeown and Williams 1975). The period was one of severe erosion when episodes of flooding washed large quantities of debris from an early mountain range and deposited the material on alluvial fans (*ibid*; Edwards and Scrivener 1999). The formation is characterised by well-cemented clasts (conglomerates composed of various older rocks) in a 'poorly sorted, clay-rich, fine to coarse-grained sandstone' (*ibid*). This weathers to a gravely clayey sand or gravely sandy clay and is often highly variable in character because it tends to consist of inter- and cross-bedded layers of sand and sandstone (ibid.). These Permian formations are overlain along the line of the Exe by much younger Pleistocene River Terrace Deposits (2.3 million to 10,000 years before present). The one inch edition geological map (Sheet 325, Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales) identifies these broadly as Terrace Gravel.

The drift geology of the site is represented by deposits of the Fourth Terrace, with a tongue of Quaternary Head deposit extending from the south into the very southwest corner of the Site. The surface of the Fourth Terrace lies about 12 metres above the floodplain and is fairly extensive between Countess Wear and Topsham (Edwards and Scrivener 1999). Here it consists of pebbly sandy gravel composed mainly of rounded quartzite with some angular to sub-angular flint (ibid.). Between Countess Wear and Topsham it is composed of sandstone pebbles and cobbles in a sparse reddish brown sandy matrix (ibid.).

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Figure 1. Site location including evaluation trenches

1.2 Planning Background

An application for outline planning permission is being prepared for the development of land north of the M5 and west of Topsham Road. It is located within the defined boundaries of the Exeter Principal Urban Area, and in the search areas for the "second strategic urban extension" proposed by the draft South West Regional Spatial Strategy. The proposal consists of new residential development to the north and south of the site, with a wide central band of formal and informal recreation areas and ecological corridor. There will be a band of new woodland along the eastern boundary of the site adjacent to the motorway.

1.3 Archaeological Background

This report is an addendum to the evaluation trenching previously carried out in the Autumn of 2008. As such the main description of the archaeological background can be found in that report. It should be noted that a desk-based assessment of the site has been carried out (JMHS 2008a) along with a geophysical survey (Stratascan 2008), an evaluation (JMHS 2008b) and a further evaluation in the vicinity (JMHS 2007a).

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To determine as far as reasonably practicable, the location, extent, date, character, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological artefacts.

- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

In particular

- To confirm the results of the field survey undertaken in 1985-6 (Sage and Allen 2004).

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In response to Exeter City Council's request a scheme of investigation was designed by JMHS and agreed with Exeter City Council and the applicant. The work was carried out by JMHS and involved a field-walking survey across the site (Fig. 1).

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of artefacts were defined in the *Written Scheme of Investigation*. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (2001) and the procedures laid down in MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

3.2 Methodology

A 20m x 20m grid was imposed over the entire area, which was aligned directly with the OS grid. All field-walking took place on this grid and transects were walked south to north on the eastings, while the northings provided a measure for the collection-units (figure 2). The grid was aligned from know GPS points and laid out using a Leica TR407 total station with full traverse kit.

The eastings were identified with number from 300 to 980 and from 000 to 100. These relate to the OS grid by the prefix 295 for number from 300 to 980 and 296 for numbers from 000 to 100 (Figure 2).

The northings were identified in 100m long units with numbers from 100 to 800, related to the OS grid by the prefix 890. Each unit was sub-divided into 5 20m collection-units labelled A to E. A being 0 –20m, B 20 – 40m and so on

Each transect was spaced at 20m intervals and walked by a single individual, the width of the collection area for each units was approximately 1 – 1.5m. All flint was collected from the transect strip. This would give roughly 5% coverage of the entire area. It was agreed with Exeter City Council that only lithic artefacts would be collected. This was based on the results of the finds from the preliminary evaluation, in which no medieval pottery was recovered except in stratified contexts. Bronze Age pottery would not survive modern agricultural practices.

Figure 2 shows certain squares not walked during the survey, these were either because they lay out side the ploughed area of the fields and the undergrowth prevented survey or they lay within the boundaries of the previously recorded quarry area (JMHS 2008b).

A contingency was available to sample identified concentrations on a 10m grid, however it was felt during field work that it would not help to further define those located.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each transect walked, with scale plans.

4 RESULTS

4.1 The Surface Assemblage *(By Martin Tingle)*

The assemblage of material from surface collection is composed of approximately 287 pieces of worked flint and chert (including at least one piece of Portland type chert). These are mostly unretouched flakes although there are some recognisable tool types including complete and broken scrapers and a single chisel arrowhead. This particular piece is datable to the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age although there may be other material from earlier or later period present. No Mesolithic material was recognised in the assemblage.

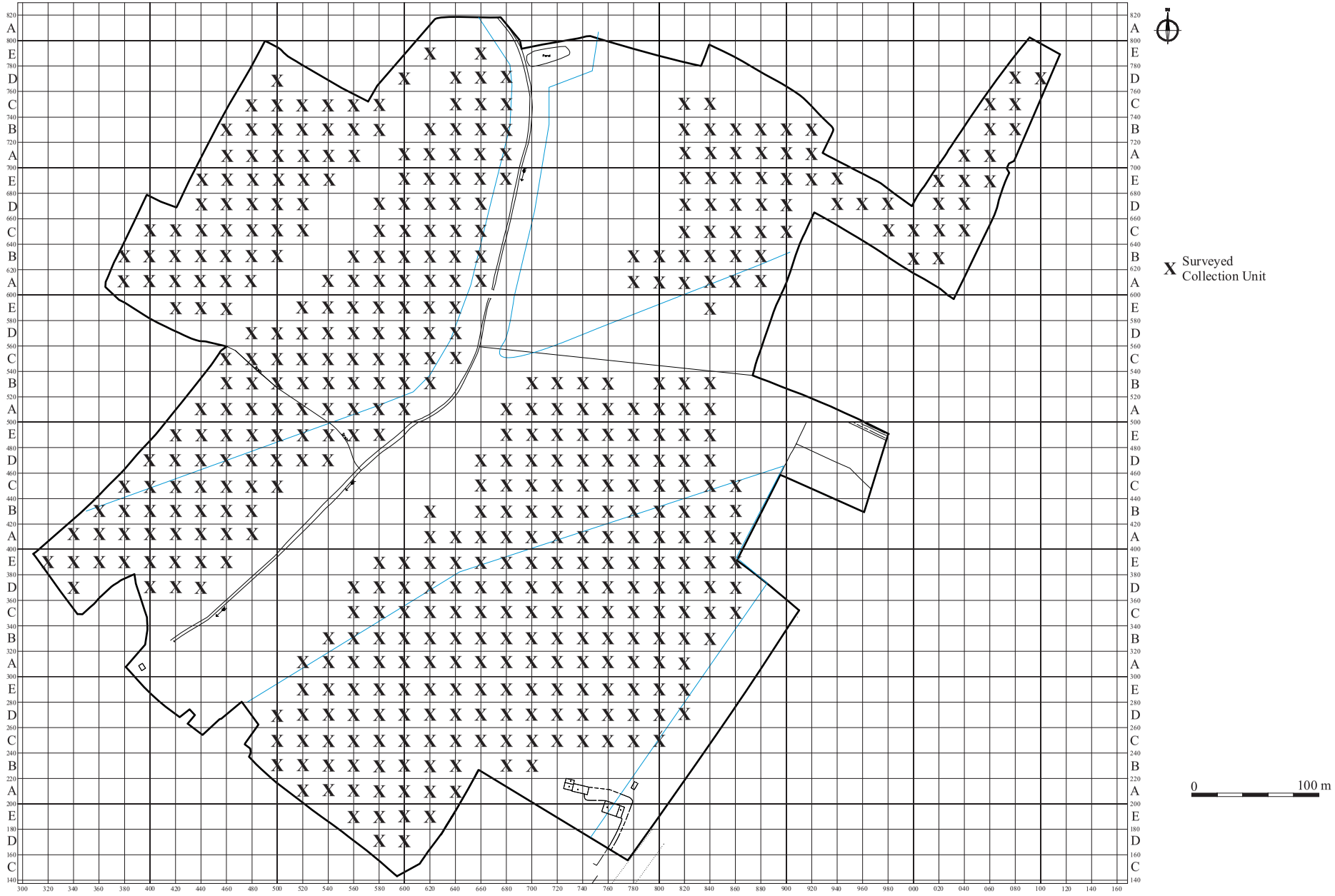

Figure 2. Map of the Collection Units

Easting	Northing	Transect	Find	Weight (g)	Comment
40	600	C	Tertiary Flake	27	
80	700	C	Tertiary Flake	16	
80	700	C	Uncorticated Flake	3	
100	700	D	Broken Flake	6	
100	700	D	Secondary Flake	6	
100	700	D	Secondary Flake	11	
340	400	A	Broken Flake	15	
380	400	A	Secondary Flake	76	Orange Chert
380	400	C	Broken Flake	3	
380	400	C	Broken Flake	3	
400	600	A	Broken Flake	2	
400	600	A	Scraper	6	
420	400	C	Broken Flake	2	Orange Chert
420	600	B	Uncorticated Flake	3	
420	600	B	Tertiary Flake	5	
420	600	B	Core Fragment	27	
440	600	C	Core Fragment	15	
440	600	C	Tertiary Flake	1	
440	600	C	Uncorticated Flake	1	
460	200	E	Tertiary Flake	10	
460	200	E	Uncorticated Flake	2	
460	200	B	Broken Flake	1	
460	400	D	Tertiary Flake	9	Orange Chert
460	400	C	Secondary Flake	4	
460	400	A	Unworked Burnt flint	15	
460	500	E	Tertiary Flake	16	Dark Brown Chert
460	600	E	Broken Flake	2	
460	600	E	Broken Flake	1	
460	700	A	Scraper	23	Broken tip
480	300	B	Tertiary Flake	21	Red Orange Chert
480	300	B	Broken Flake	2	
480	400	A	Primary Flake	2	
480	400	B	Uncorticated Flake	1	
480	400	B	Secondary Flake	5	
480	600	C	Uncorticated Flake	1	
480	600	E	Tertiary Flake	31	
480	600	E	Broken Flake	4	
520	200	C	Secondary Flake	11	Dark Brown Chert
520	200	C	Tertiary Flake	4	Orange Chert
520	500	D	Scraper	17	
520	500	D	Tertiary Flake	30	
520	500	A	Secondary Flake	34	
520	600	C	Primary Flake	2	
520	600	C	Broken Flake	2	
520	700	A	Primary Flake	18	
520	700	A	Uncorticated Flake	1	
520	700	B	Broken Flake	2	
540	200	A	Tertiary Flake	2	
540	200	A	Broken Flake	1	
540	200	E	Broken Flake	3	

Easting	Northing	Transect	Find	Weight (g)	Comment
540	200	E	Tertiary Flake	18	
540	200	D	Uncorticated Flake	11	
540	300	B	Broken Flake	2	
540	400	E	Tertiary Flake	12	
540	400	D	Unworked Burnt flint	5	
540	600	D	Uncorticated Flake	6	
540	600	D	Broken Flake	8	
540	700	B	Systematic Core	19	"Beer" Flint
560	100	E	Uncorticated Flake	23	Dark Brown Chert
560	100	E	Uncorticated Flake	8	
560	100	E	Broken Flake	4	
560	200	A	Core Fragment	15	
560	200	A	Uncorticated Flake	7	
560	200	D	Uncorticated Flake	2	
560	200	D	Broken Flake	2	
560	200	C	Uncorticated Flake	2	
560	200	B	Primary Flake	9	
560	300	B	Uncorticated Flake	3	
560	300	A	Broken Flake	2	
560	300	A	Primary Flake	21	Dark Brown Chert
560	500	D	Tertiary Flake	40	Orange Chert
560	500	D	Tertiary Flake	30	Dark Brown Chert
560	500	C	Uncorticated Flake	2	
560	500	C	Broken Flake	3	Portland type Chert
560	600	A	Core Fragment	13	
560	600	A	Tertiary Flake	8	
560	600	E	Uncorticated Flake	12	
560	600	B	Uncorticated Flake	15	
560	700	A	Uncorticated Flake	3	
580	100	E	Broken Flake	7	Dark Brown Chert
580	100	E	Broken Flake	8	
580	200	D	Primary Flake	5	
580	200	D	Uncorticated Flake	7	
580	200	E	Broken Flake	4	
580	200	E	Secondary Flake	28	Orange Chert
580	200	C	Tertiary Flake	14	
580	200	B	Uncorticated Flake	10	
580	300	C	Tertiary Flake	17	Orange Chert
580	300	C	Primary Flake	3	
580	300	C	Broken Flake	4	
580	500	B	Secondary Flake	16	
580	500	E	Broken Flake	3	
580	600	C	Primary Flake	4	
580	600	A	Tertiary Flake	20	
580	600	D	Unworked Burnt flint	38	
580	700	B	Tertiary Flake	3	
600	200	E	Broken Flake	9	
600	200	C	Unsystematic Core	116	
600	200	C	Broken Flake	24	Orange Chert
600	300	B	Broken Flake	5	

Easting	Northing	Transect	Find	Weight (g)	Comment
600	300	C	Core Fragment	33	
600	300	C	Core Fragment	22	
600	300	C	Uncorticated Flake	5	
600	300	C	Uncorticated Flake	17	Dark Brown Chert
600	300	D	Uncorticated Flake	3	
600	300	E	Tertiary Flake	16	
600	300	E	Broken Flake	2	
600	500	A	Core Fragment	30	
600	500	A	Core Fragment	33	
600	500	A	Tertiary Flake	29	Red Orange Chert
600	500	C	Scraper	12	Worn
600	500	C	Burnt Worked Flint	1	
600	500	C	Tertiary Flake	8	Dark Brown Chert
600	500	C	Uncorticated Flake	6	
600	500	C	Broken Flake	13	
600	500	D	Scraper	18	
600	500	C	Broken Flake	3	
600	500	C	Broken Flake	11	
600	600	E	Uncorticated Flake	6	
600	600	E	Broken Flake	2	
600	600	E	Unworked Burnt flint	19	
600	600	B	Tertiary Flake	7	
600	600	B	Broken Flake	1	
600	600	B	Broken Flake	1	
600	600	B	Scraper	13	
600	600	A	Broken Flake	1	
600	600	E	Broken Flake	1	
600	600	E	Broken Flake	1	
600	600	E	Tertiary Flake	2	
600	600	E	Uncorticated Flake	1	
600	600	B	Tertiary Flake	15	
600	700	D	Arrowhead (Chisel)	4	
600	700	A	Broken Flake	6	
600	700	A	Tertiary Flake	4	
600	700	A	Uncorticated Flake	1	
600	700	A	Core Fragment	25	
620	100	E	Burnt Worked Flint	5	
620	200	E	Core Fragment	14	
620	300	C	Burnt Worked Flint	3	
620	500	A	Broken Flake	22	Orange Chert
620	500	D	Uncorticated Flake	5	
620	500	E	Uncorticated Flake	12	
620	500	E	Broken Flake	2	Orange Chert
620	500	B	Uncorticated Flake	10	
620	500	B	Uncorticated Flake	10	
620	500	B	Tertiary Flake	10	Orange Chert
620	500	C	Burnt Worked Flint	6	
620	500	C	Uncorticated Flake	16	Dark Brown Chert
620	600	D	Primary Flake	4	
620	600	E	Broken Flake	6	

Easting	Northing	Transect	Find	Weight (g)	Comment
620	600	E	Broken Flake	4	
620	700	B	Core Fragment	14	
620	700	B	Burnt Worked Flint	4	
620	700	A	Uncorticated Flake	2	
620	700	A	Broken Flake	1	
620	700	A	Secondary Flake	6	Red Orange Chert
640	200	B	Tertiary Flake	2	Orange Chert
640	200	C	Tertiary Flake	13	
640	200	C	Uncorticated Flake	2	
640	300	E	Uncorticated Flake	4	
640	400	A	Core Fragment	25	
640	500	D	Uncorticated Flake	3	
640	500	D	Uncorticated Flake	9	
640	500	D	Uncorticated Flake	3	
640	500	D	Broken Flake	10	
640	500	C	Secondary Flake	30	
640	600	E	Burnt Worked Flint	5	
640	600	E	Uncorticated Flake	10	
640	600	E	Uncorticated Flake	2	
640	600	E	Uncorticated Flake	3	
640	600	E	Tertiary Flake	5	
640	600	E	Secondary Flake	6	
640	600	E	Broken Flake	1	
640	700	B	Tertiary Flake	22	
640	700	B	Broken Flake	9	
640	700	A	Uncorticated Flake	6	
640	700	A	Uncorticated Flake	3	
680	200	E	Primary Flake	3	Orange Chert
680	200	E	Tertiary Flake	5	
680	300	E	Burnt Worked Flint	12	
680	300	D	Secondary Flake	9	Orange Chert
700	480	A	Uncorticated Flake	12	
740	400	E	Burnt Worked Flint	23	
760	200	E	Tertiary Flake	7	
760	300	E	Scraper	29	Worn
760	400	A	Broken Flake	12	Orange Chert
780	300	A	Broken Flake	3	Orange Chert
800	200	E	Core Fragment	21	Orange Chert
800	200	C	Uncorticated Flake	7	
800	400	E	Secondary Flake	4	Orange Chert
840	600	B	Uncorticated Flake	1	
840	700	A	Broken Flake	2	
840	700	C	Uncorticated Flake	2	
860	600	B	Secondary Flake	15	
860	600	A	Uncorticated Flake	8	
860	600	A	Tertiary Flake	3	
860	600	A	Broken Flake	6	
860	600	A	Broken Flake	1	
860	600	C	Broken Flake	1	

Easting	Northing	Transect	Find	Weight (g)	Comment
880	600	E	Uncorticated Flake	5	
880	600	C	Uncorticated Flake	3	
880	600	C	Tertiary Flake	13	
880	600	D	Uncorticated Flake	1	
880	600	D	Uncorticated Flake	2	
900	600	C	Core Fragment	17	
900	600	C	Uncorticated Flake	1	
900	600	C	Unworked Burnt flint	3	
940	600	D	Core Fragment	6	
940	600	D	Unworked Burnt flint	1	
960	600	D	Core Fragment	15	

There is obvious potential to compare the field walking material with that recovered from the evaluation trenches. This would allow an examination of whether the material from within the topsoil and in features at specific locations reflects the character of the assemblage from the immediate area. A comparison with the excavated finds from the 1975 excavations to the south of Topsham road may also be useful (Jarvis & Maxfield 1975, 252) at a later stage.

4.2 Survey Results

The majority of the area appears to have a thin scatter of flint artefacts across it (Figure 3). This is comparable with the results of the evaluation.

The largest concentration of material appears to the east of Trench 19 (centred on fieldwalking grid 620 700A) and down slope of it. Trench 19 located possible prehistoric postholes

A further concentration is noted to the south and east of Trench 53 (grid 860 600B). This trench together with the nearby Trench 55 produced evidence for a possible Bronze Age enclosure. Eighteen flint objects were located from this area, three of them cores.

The concentration centred on 600 500C does not appear to be associated with any activity recorded in the Trenches, the closest being Trench 29. This trench only located a post-medieval ditch. It is possible that as this area is near the base of the slope to the north west that this material is all derived from colluvial action. The material seen in the southwest of Area 1 (centred on 420 600B) could also represent these processes.

A relatively isolated concentration of artefacts is located in the vicinity of the ring ditch located in Trench 25 of the evaluation (grid 620 600 A). A seconded isolated cluster (centred on 600 400C) that included two cores was seen in the area southwest of Trench 68 and northeast of Trench 73. Both Trenches were some distance from this concentration. Trench 73 was devoid of archaeological features, however, trench 68 recorded two linear ditches one 18th century, but the other possible considerably earlier.

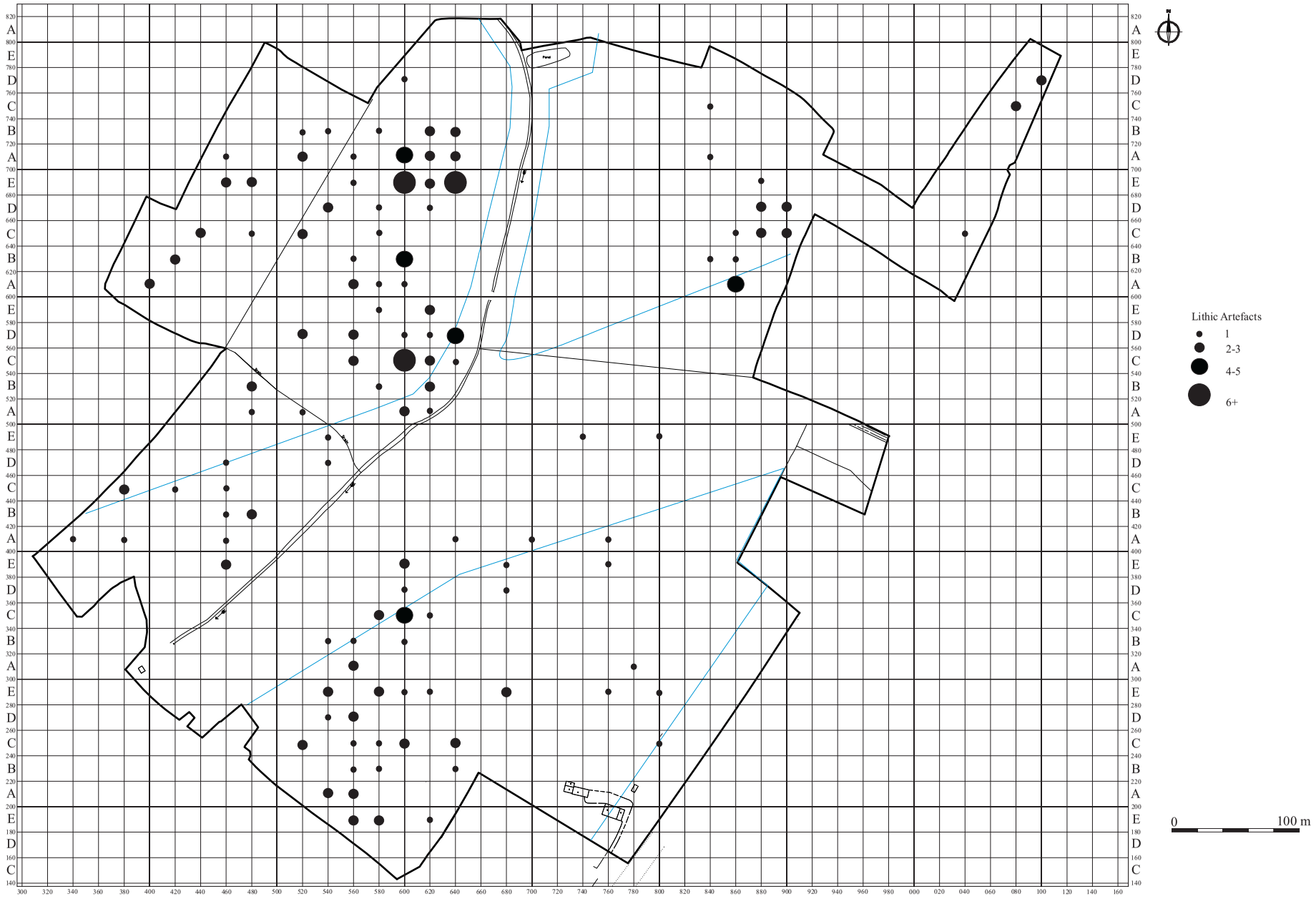

Figure 3. Distribution Map - All Lithics

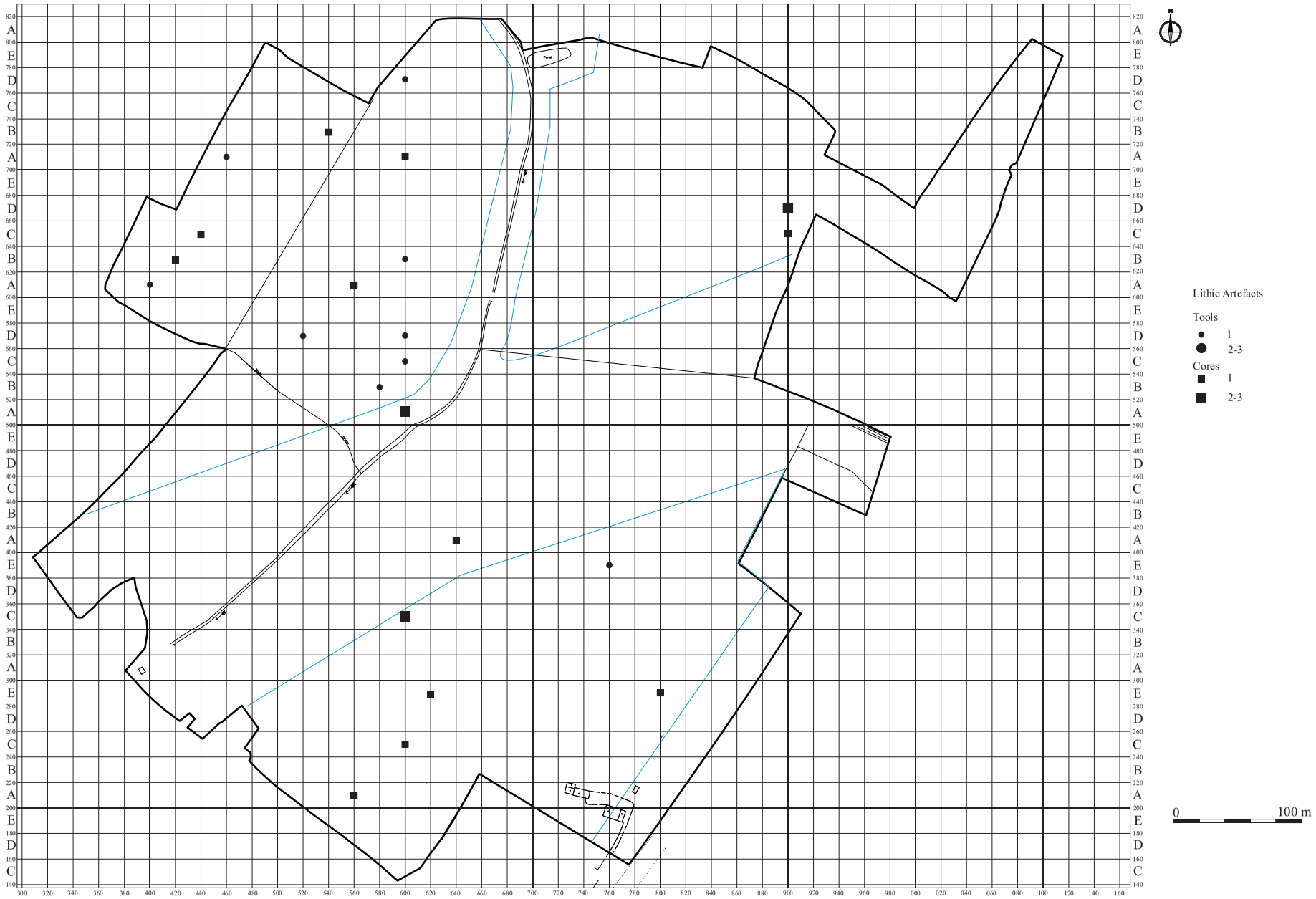

Figure 4. Distribution Map - Tools and Cores

In the extreme northeast of the site was another isolated small concentration. This area was not subject to evaluation by trenching, but the geophysical survey recorded a possible linear ditch in this area.

There appears to be a thin halo of a flint scatter surrounding Trench 87 (grid 600 100 E) and its pits with possible votive deposits.

Although Trench 76 produced large amounts of Bronze Age pottery there appears to be no associated surface scatter of lithic material (grid 720 200C).

In general the field walking confirmed the results of the evaluation in that concentrations of flint appear to be associated with topsoil lithic finds and sub-soil archaeological features.

4.3 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The reliability of results is considered to be moderate.

The survey took place during a period of dry but very cold weather. Several mornings the fields were the subject of heavy ground frost that obscured artefacts and froze them to the ground.

The fields had not been ploughed as traditionally known, but a disc harrow had been employed to disturb the soil prior to drilling and seeding. This meant that although the previous crop had been harvested a considerable amount of chaff was still present on the surface of the ground, resulting in on average 10% ground cover, but in places as high as 80%.

Fallen leaves also obscured the ground in transects close to hedgerows. The previous wet weather coupled with the frost ensured that what little wind there was, was not sufficient blow them away.

Heavy rain in the area prior to walking had obvious created pools of standing water for a time as these areas appeared as silted hollows in the field, again obscuring visibility of surface artefacts. In places the heavy rains had obviously battered the soils flat and the sandy clay had started to form a crust.

Low light levels and sometimes the low angles of light especially in the mornings were also problematical.

5 THE WALLSER COLLECTION *(By Martin Tingle)*

The assemblage is contained within a single museum box and comprises c. 1499 pieces of worked flint accessed in 1992. There are no accompanying records other than a map fragment showing the location from which the material was collected (figure 5).

There are a total of 5 bags marked with four different numbers representing complete and partial hectare squares: SX 955 894/5 (c.400 pieces), SX 964/5 896/7 (350

pieces), SX 956 893 (414 pieces) and SX 955 894 (two bags, one with 290 pieces of worked flint and chert and another with 45 pieces of burnt worked flint) There is no indication why the collection was made, although the address of Mark Wallser in the museum archive is given as Exeter University, so it is possible that it may have been part of an undergraduate or post graduate study. No account of any surface collection methodology accompanied the finds, however the map indicates that it would was based on the Ordnance Survey hectare grid. The amount of material recovered compared to that of this surface collection suggests that an intensive or "total" collection method was adopted.

The finds appear to have been sorted through following deposition, since a note appears in several of the bags stating "A considerable amount of natural material has been weeded out. PSB" (PSB is almost certainly Peter Berridge who worked on many of Exeter Museums lithic collections during the 1980's and 1990's). Certain of the artefacts have been grouped. A single bag contains only burnt worked flint while a single microlith has been similarly isolated (probably by PSB). No other retouched tools were noted in the assemblage suggesting that these too may have been separated and at some stage removed from the assemblage as a whole.

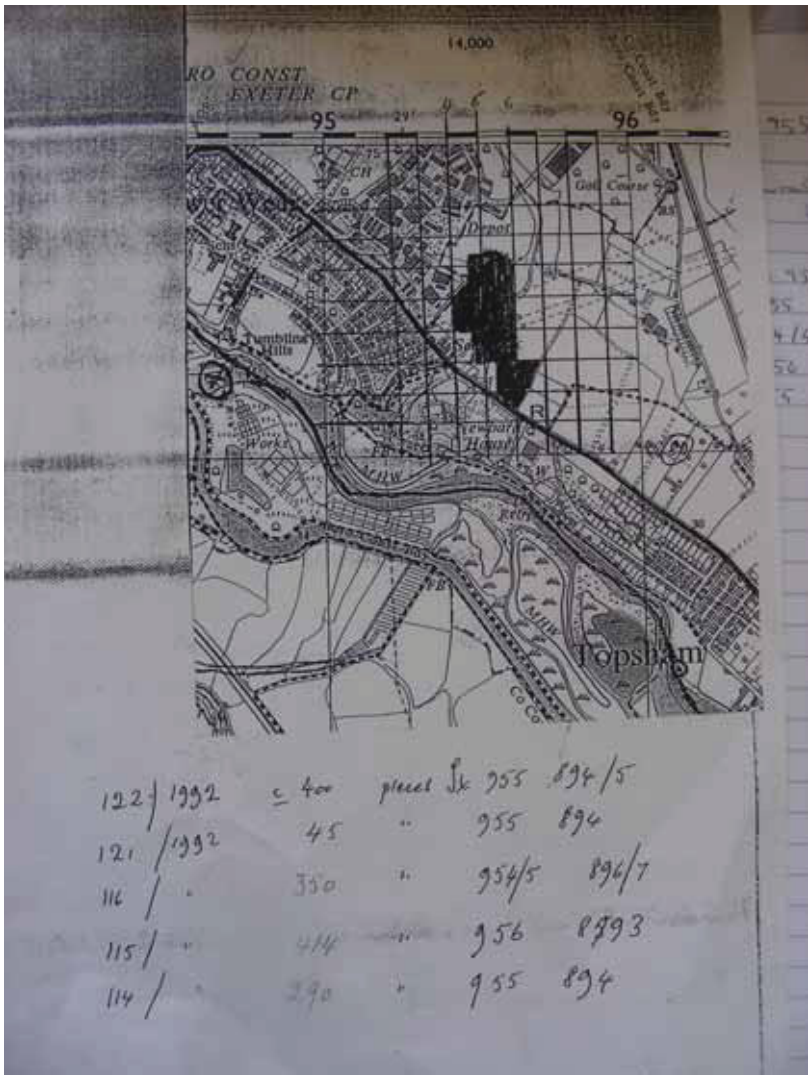

Figure 5. Wallser's Map

The potential for comparison between these groups is limited. Although the Wallser material is a surface collection it is difficult to compare it with this surface collection since they clearly adopted different methodologies. The fact that much of the material Wallser collected was later deemed natural and "weeded out" does throw some doubt on his abilities in finds recognition and the absence of retouched tools may also suggest that the assemblage is incomplete.

6 DISCUSSION

Considering the quantity of material from the Wallser Collection (1499) an initial appraisal of the results would appear that they are quite disappointing. However, we must consider the two differing methodological approaches.

Wallser used an intensive or "total" 100% collection method across 4 total and 8 partial hectare units. The map (Figure 5) of these collection areas is quite strange only some field boundaries are respected, other ignored. The northern limit of the survey appears to be quite arbitrary and topographic features such as the seabrook stream do not appear to have impinged upon the survey. Unfortunately all the finds from a one-hectare collection unit are bagged together, not allowing for any greater resolution of the pattern of the scatter.

The methodology employed in this survey gives a 5% sample across the area. The survey collected 287 artefacts and a simple calculation would project a total collection figure of 5740, considering the poor visibility of artefacts due to the ground and weather conditions (see 4.3) this is a very large figure, indicating a major lithic scatter.

The lithic concentrations are generally close to known archaeological features recorded during the evaluation, but not directly over them. Those in Area 4 and Area 6 appear to be slightly down slope of the identified features, as one would expect due to the erosion effects of ploughing. This process also possibly explains the material located to the southwest of Area 1 (Figures 1 and 3).

Considering this factor, it is probably advantageous that the field-walking survey was conducted after the evaluation so that its results did not help shape the design of the trench locations. The lithic concentrations around 600 300C and 600 500C still remain to be associated with any archaeological features that perhaps trenching could have identified.

The pattern of tool and core location did not show any real pattern (Figure 4), although it could possible be argued that a concentration of cores and debris occurs near 900 600D; the area identified by the evaluation as a possible Bronze Age enclosure.

Interestingly a minor concentration of material was seen in the extreme north east of the site in Area 2 that was not subject to the evaluation, but where the geophysical survey identified a possible ditch.

The DBA (JMHS 2008a) suggests a significant Mesolithic presence on the site and in the vicinity. No Mesolithic material was recovered and Wallser only recovered a

single microlith. This must be viewed as a casual loss rather than any greater amount of activity. Not unusual considering the location near to the River Exe and the Seabrook, which probably provided excellent hunting grounds. This appears to have held true into the Neolithic and the arrowhead recovered from 600 700D probably represents hunting activity. It has been suggested that such chisel arrowheads are used for the hunting of wild birds (Prof. A. Whittle *pers com*.) and this would match with predicted environment of the time.

In general the lithic scatters compliment and confirm the evaluation results. The majority of the flint appears to be contemporary with the Bronze Age activity previously recorded in the area.

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