
Birmingham's rural fringe: an archaeological survey of the Green Belt in Sutton Coldfield, 1994–99

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ABSTRACT

Fieldwalking and earthwork survey on the north-east side of the Birmingham conurbation retrieved prehistoric worked flint, Roman pottery and medieval pottery, and recorded burnt mounds, former field boundaries, ridge and furrow, and other features providing information on settlement and land exploitation at different periods. The results complemented and augmented those from previous field survey and contributed to subsequent watching briefs, evaluations and excavations required as part of new developments. They demonstrate the future archaeological potential of the survey area and the consequent requirement for further, more extensive, archaeological work as part of proposed development.

INTRODUCTION

The Field Group of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society undertook an archaeological survey of the Green Belt east of Sutton Coldfield from 1994 to 1999. Most previous archaeological work in the area had been site-specific, therefore the survey aimed to cover the entire landscape. It was not undertaken in response to works anticipated to affect archaeological remains, but its results were used in assessment of the impact of a proposed, but not eventually implemented, large development near Peddimore Hall and in archaeological investigation as part of the construction of the M6 Toll motorway. Although it was not anticipated at the time of the survey, the results have subsequently contributed to an assessment of the impact of proposed large-scale residential and industrial development on the archaeology of the Green Belt.

LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The survey was originally intended to cover the whole of the Green Belt, to both the north and east of Sutton Coldfield, but it eventually covered that to the east only. The survey area (Fig 1) therefore consisted of about 10 square kilometres bounded on the north by Tamworth Road (A453), on the east by the boundary of the City of Birmingham with Middleton, Wishaw and Curdworth in Warwickshire, and to the west and south by the built-up areas of Sutton Coldfield and Minworth respectively. It includes land in agricultural use, for arable and pasture, small patches of woodland and a golf course.

The highest point of the survey area, at 143m AOD, is in its north-western corner, and the lowest is just under 85m AOD, in its south. Much of the area consists of ridges or small plateaux sloping into valleys containing small streams, including Langley Brook and its tributary Collets Brook in the eastern part of the survey area, that ultimately flow into the River Tame. In the south the Hurst Brook flows through gently sloping land in a basin around Peddimore Hall, again into the River Tame.

The solid geology of the survey area is predominantly Mercia Mudstone (formerly known as Keuper Marl) which consists of mudstones and silty mudstones and is easily eroded to form a gently undulating landscape of relatively impermeable clayey and pebble-free soils. Large areas are covered by glacial drift deposits, some of which are derived from Mercia Mudstone and therefore share its properties, but this is not always the case, such that in some places soils on Mercia Mudstone are sandy, pebbly and free-draining. Arden Sandstone (grey sandstones and shales) outcrops at Wiggins Hill and Grove End resulting in locally raised areas. The stream valleys contain alluvium and the extreme south of the survey area includes a gravel terrace along the River Tame.

PREVIOUS AND SUBSEQUENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK IN THE SURVEY AREA

As noted above, other archaeological fieldwork in the survey area has been specific to individual sites or in response to individual developments. A walkover survey, aerial photography and a small excavation took place in 1972 along the proposed line of the A38 (Anon 1972) and a survey of land around the moated site at Peddimore Hall was undertaken in 1977 (Spolton 1977). Earthworks at Wiggins Hill were recorded in 1969 (Bond 1969). Sites in the area were included in a survey of the archaeology of the parish of Sutton Coldfield in 1977 (Hodder 1977), and in 1980–81 fieldwalking and earthwork survey took place in areas of former common wasteland and on and around hamlets, moated sites and isolated homesteads as part of a research project that also included adjoining areas (Hodder 1988; 1992a; 2004).

While the survey reported here was underway, initial archaeological work in advance of construction of the M6 Toll motorway included fieldwalking and

evaluation trenching (Powell *et al* 2008), and an extensive evaluation by trenching undertaken south and east of Peddimore Hall in 1998 in advance of proposed development revealed medieval and probable prehistoric features (Mould 1998). Subsequent work, all in response to development, has included excavation and targeted watching briefs around Langley Mill Farm in the east of the survey area in advance of construction of the M6 Toll motorway which revealed and investigated prehistoric and Roman features (Powell *et al* 2008); excavation of medieval features at Pool Hall (Coutts 2007; 2011); building recording, including dendrochronological dating of post-medieval farm buildings, at Langley Heath Farm and Peddimore Hall (Hislop 2006; Arnold & Howard 2007; Lobb 2007; Upson-Smith 2010); recording of medieval and post-medieval buildings and excavation of medieval features at Minworth Greaves (Warwickshire Mus Field Serv 1999; Pack 2001; Hodder 2004, 99–100); and building recording at Barn Farm (which has since been demolished) and Peddimore Hall (Lowe & Adams 2008; Alcock 1996, 141–3). An assessment of the impact of proposed development in the Green Belt on archaeological remains and the historic environment was undertaken in 2013 (Birmingham City Council 2013).

EXISTING ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The archaeological information available when the survey began in 1994 consisted of the results of the targeted fieldwalking in 1980–81 mentioned above, some chance finds, and records of sites surviving as earthworks or buildings. Evidence of prehistoric activity consisted of finds of finished tools and waste flakes of Mesolithic and later type. Small quantities of Roman pottery were found at Wiggins Hill, where a coin hoard was found in the 19th century (Chattock 1884, 235), and at Over Green (Hodder 1988; 1992a). A group of narrow rectangular fields called the Burrels was suggested to be of Roman or pre-Roman origin (Hodder 1992b).

Wiggins Hill is recorded in Domesday Book (Morris 1976, 17,12) as *Winchicelle*, held from Turchill of Warwick by Bruning and consisting of 3 virgates, including land for one plough, 5 acres of meadow and woodland 2 furlongs long and wide, worth 5 shillings. This estate can be interpreted as a strip of land running down to the River Tame and bounded to the east by Curdworth and to the west by Minworth, which was originally a detached part of Curdworth parish. Except

for a small part originally in Minworth (*ibid* 17,4), the remainder of the survey area lies in the Domesday manor of Sutton Coldfield (*ibid* 1,7), which included a large area of woodland, possibly to the east of the town. There may also have been settlements at this time at Over Green and Grove End, hamlets which are known to have been in existence by the medieval period. They straddle the boundary with Wishaw parish and therefore could have been included in the Wishaw entry in Domesday Book (*ibid* 28,4; Hodder 1992a). There are medieval moated sites at Peddimore Hall, Over Green, Langley Hall and Walmley Ash. Concentrations of medieval pottery from fieldwalking at Over Green, Grove End and Wiggins Hill confirm the existence of medieval settlements here (Hodder 1988; 1992a; 1992b; 2004). Documents, buildings, and a medieval pit and field or paddock boundary found in excavation show that the settlement at Minworth Greaves was also in existence by the medieval period (Warwickshire Mus Field Serv 1999; Pack 2001; Hodder 1988, 209–10; 2004, 99–100), and excavations at Pool Hall in Over Green revealed a 12th- to 13th-century boundary ditch and a sandstone wall footing of 15th- or 16th-century date (Coutts 2007; 2011).

An open field divided into strips to the west and east of Wiggins Hill is recorded on maps and in documents, and ridge and furrow indicates former medieval arable land around Peddimore Hall. The location of assarting recorded in 1240–1 around Peddimore Hall and to its north can be identified from field-names recorded on the Corn Rent map of 1824–25 (Mason 1980; Corn Rent Map); it included Burrels, where abandoned earlier field systems may have been brought back into cultivation (Hodder 1992b). The survey area lay within the hunting reserve of Sutton Chase in the medieval period, resulting in some regulation of land use. This is documented at Peddimore Hall in 1288, where enclosure of land was allowed provided does and their fawns could leap over the fences, and excavation near here located ditches of medieval field boundaries whose dimensions corresponded to those prescribed in 1301–2 at Dunton in Curdworth parish, also in Sutton Chase: a ditch no wider than 3 feet 6 inches (1.07m) and a bank no higher than 1 foot 6 inches (0.47m) (Dugdale 1656, 675, 683; Mould 1998, 37).

Three buildings of medieval date are known to survive in the survey area, and a fourth, Minworth Greaves, was re-erected in Bournville in 1929–32. Minworth Greaves, The Grove in Grove End (Chatwin & Harcourt 1946, 4–5) and Forge Farm are cruck-framed buildings and although none of them has been dated by

dendrochronology, felling dates of 1442–44 and 1425 respectively have been obtained for nearby crucks at The Old Smithy and New Shipton Farm (Leather 2002, 40). A timber-framed barn at Minworth Greaves has been dated by dendrochronology to 1453–76 (Tyers & Groves 2001, 90). Peddimore Hall was constructed *c* 1660 in brick with stone dressings (Spolton 1972; Alcock 1996, 141–3), and amongst its associated farm buildings a timber-framed barn was constructed in the early 18th century, reusing timbers of 16th- and 17th-century dates and possibly replacing an earlier structure on the same site (Lobb 2007; Upson-Smith 2010). The roof timbers of a barn at Langley Heath Farm were dated to 1772–75 (Hislop 2006; Arnold & Howard 2007), and Barn Farm was shown to be early 19th century in date and to have been constructed on the site of an earlier building (Lowe & Adams 2008). Both Langley Heath Farm and Barn Farm pre-date the 19th-century enclosure of land adjoining them.

The Yates map of Warwickshire, published in 1793, shows extensive areas of ‘unenclosed common waste’ in the north and west of the survey area. Encroachment onto this was encouraged, and subsequently regulated, in the 16th century (Beresford 1943); it was formally enclosed following an Act of Parliament in 1824. The history of enclosure in the survey area has resulted in a landscape of contrasts, consisting of old field enclosures of irregular shape; old enclosures of more regular form like the Burrels; enclosed former open-field strips retaining their long narrow shape and ‘reversed-S’ form (although no longer visible on the ground); and distinctive rectangular hedged fields resulting from the early 19th-century enclosure, accompanying contemporary farm buildings.

METHODS

The recording methods for the survey followed those used in the Field Group’s earlier survey of Barston, which in turn were derived from those used in the Sandwell Valley (Burnett 2008; Hewitt & Hodder 1988). They were designed to cover large areas of land fairly quickly and for use by teams that included people with little or no previous experience of such surveys. Each field was allotted a unique number prefixed SN, and the field record included its topography, land use, vegetation and the boundaries of each field, even if it was not available for fieldwalking. The Feature Record was used for earthworks, which were recorded by field number, and included a measured sketch plan. Fields accessible for fieldwalking (systematic collection of artefacts from a ploughed surface) were divided into

zones if they were large, identified by field number and Z1, Z2 etc. The Fieldwalking Record for each zone included slopes, soil type, and conditions at the time of walking, including state of cultivation, soil colour, soil moisture, and lighting. Each zone was walked in parallel lines each 2m to 3m apart, with the aim of seeing 40% of the field surface. Buildings were not systematically recorded in the survey.

RESULTS (FIG 2)

Prehistoric

Over 50 pieces of worked flint likely to be of prehistoric date were found in fieldwalking during the survey, and three definite and two possible burnt mounds were discovered. As noted in Barfield’s report below, other than a possible Palaeolithic piece, a rare find in this area, the worked flint assemblage contains more pieces of late Neolithic than Mesolithic type, in contrast to those from other parts of the west midlands. Worked flint was found throughout the survey area, and there were some small concentrations: west of Grove Lane between Over Green and Grove End, near a stream (SN 2, 3, 4, 42, 134); near Wishaw Lane east of Peddimore Hall (SN48, 103), again near a stream; near Wiggins Hill Farm (SN11); and on higher ground near Fox Hollies (SN84). All but one of the burnt mounds found in the survey were identified as concentrations of heat-shattered pebbles on field surfaces, near streams: in Sutton, as in Barston but unlike in south Birmingham and other areas, no stream walking was undertaken. The burnt mounds are likely to be of Middle Bronze Age date like those found elsewhere in the west midlands (Barfield & Hodder 1989; 2011). The Withy Hill Road burnt mound consisted of a spread of burnt stone measuring 21m long by 12m wide, on a tributary of Langley Brook; at Springfield Road, on Langley Brook, the burnt stone spread was about 20m across; the burnt mound on Hurst Brook west of Wiggins Hill was 10m long and 5.8m wide; south of Langley Mill Farm there was a 12.5m-long exposure in the south bank of Langley Brook; and east of Fox Hollies burnt stones were scattered over a wide area. No prehistoric pottery was found in fieldwalking.

Roman

A small quantity of Roman pottery was found, consisting of no more than a few sherds from each location and often just a single sherd from a collection zone. The datable material ranges across the Roman period but with a very slight concentration in the 3rd

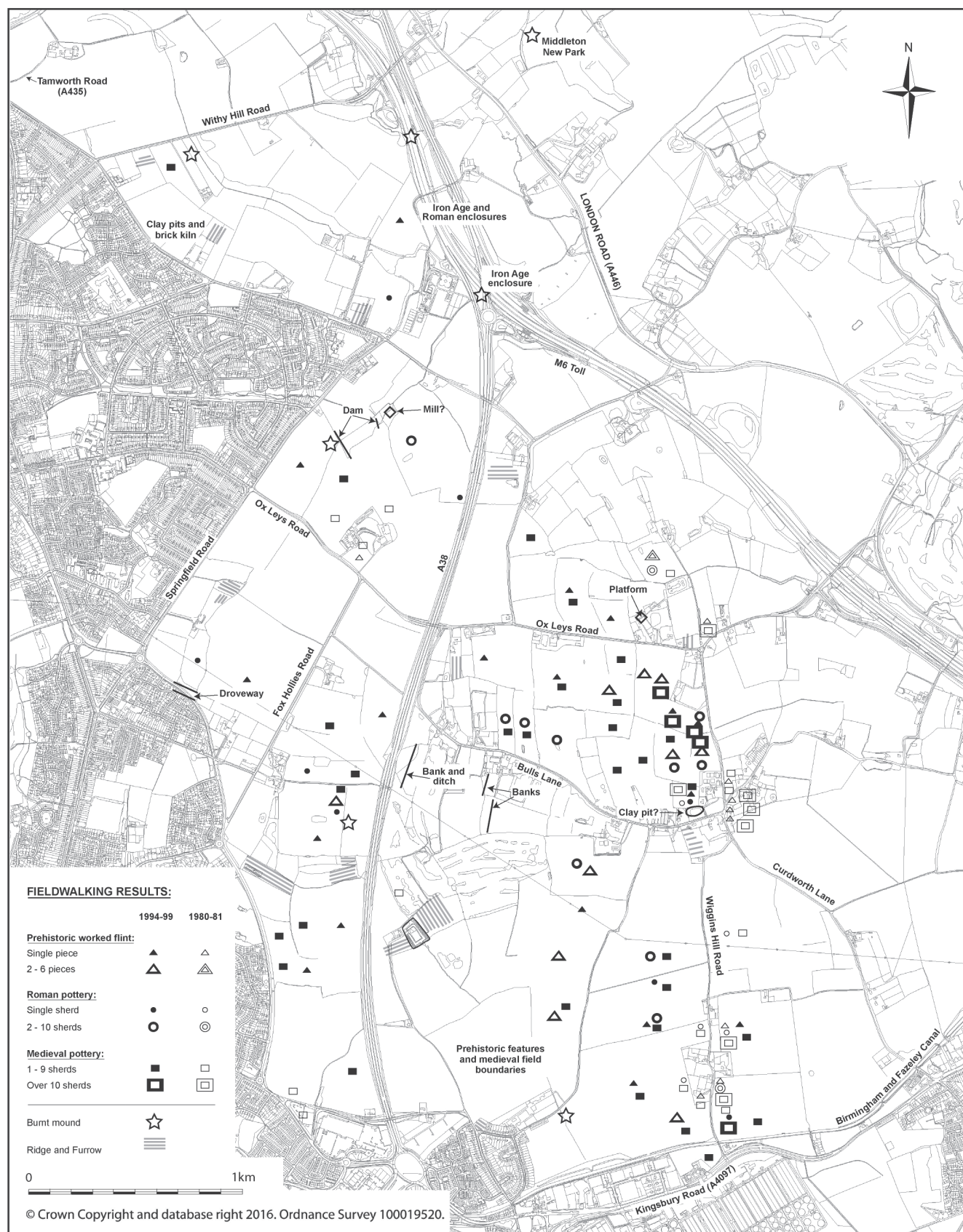


Fig 2 Sutton Coldfield survey: fieldwalking results and other features

and 4th centuries. It is likely to have been deposited through manuring arable land with domestic debris which incidentally included broken pottery that had been thrown onto middens of otherwise organic material, therefore its overall distribution indicates the extent of arable land rather than actual settlements, but clusters of pottery focused on Over Green, Fox Hollies, Brockhurst Farm and Wiggins Hill suggest the location of settlements from which the land was farmed. Pottery in the Burrels field system confirms that this area was arable land in the Roman period and lends support to the suggestion that the field system here is Roman or pre-Roman in date. In addition, the alignment of undated banks, possibly former field boundaries, south of Bulls Lane, suggests that they represent a continuation of the Burrels field system to the north. Roman pottery is notably absent from several parts of the survey area, including the vicinity of Peddimore Hall.

Medieval and later

The Anglo-Saxon period was not represented by any artefacts or datable features in the survey. The earliest datable archaeological evidence for the medieval period found in the survey consists of a small quantity of pottery of 12th- or 13th-century date, although the bulk of the medieval pottery found in fieldwalking is of 13th- to 14th-century date. As noted by Rátkai (below), there are concentrations around Wiggins Hill, Over Green and Grove End. Smaller quantities found elsewhere in the survey area, such as at Fox Hollies, are likely to result from manuring arable land with domestic debris. Rátkai also notes a marked absence of medieval pottery from the area around the moated site at Peddimore Hall.

Some of the undated features recorded as earthworks in this project are likely to date to the medieval period. Ridge and furrow was also recorded at several locations, including Springfield Farm where the field pattern around it suggests that it was an intake from common land. At Signal Hayes driveways run between a distinctive pattern of small rectangular fields and out onto the former edge of areas of common waste that were not enclosed until the 19th century. The banks south of Bulls Lane and a low bank and ditch running uphill in Fox Covert may be medieval in date. A probable house platform was recorded at Grove End. Earthworks across Langley Brook north-west of Langley Hall are dams of former ponds marked on the Corn Rent map of 1824–25: areas of dressed sandstone to the south-east and north-east and a millstone found to

the north-east indicate possible watermill sites. As well as features related to agriculture, crucibles of medieval or early post-medieval date found west of Grove End indicate small-scale metal working.

Post-medieval pottery was not systematically collected in fieldwalking, but what was retrieved included some possible wasters of blackware and Cistercian ware. Some of the undated earthworks mentioned above could be post-medieval in date, such as the house platforms at Grove End and the pond dams and possible watermill near Langley Hall. A pit with a ramp on one side in Over Green, marked as a pond on 19th-century maps, may have originated as a clay pit. Clay pits east of the early 19th-century Barn Farm surround a blackened area on the field surface which contains many fragments of brick and tile wasters, some misshapen, and is likely to be the site of a kiln where the materials to build the farm were made.

WORKED FLINT

By L H Barfield†

A total of 62 struck flints was collected together with several lumps (22) of unworked flint (Table 1, Fig 1). The struck flint is mostly undatable and includes many fragmentary and atypical pieces. Also present, however, is material which could be tentatively attributed to the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods and there are also some recent gun flints. One piece may be Palaeolithic.

Raw material

A variety of flint quality is represented. This includes pebble flint with rolled cortex, probably local in origin and a rich, dark brown to orange-brown flint with a thin white cortex probably imported from areas of chalk geology.

Cores

Ten cores or core fragments are present. Two are small and have characteristics which suggest preparation as bladelet cores and thus are probably Mesolithic. Of these, that from SN12 Z2, shows the preparation of a crested edge for blade striking; that from S24 Z1 may also be a bladelet core. There are several irregular flake cores with single or multiple platforms. Some of these are in good quality, rich deep brown to orange-brown flint. Of these, that from SN4 Z2 has a thin white cortex suggesting imported flint from an area of chalk

Table 1 Worked flint catalogue (* illustrated on Fig 3)

Field number and zone	Description
SN2 Z1	Double-ended end-scraper*; 5 flakes and chunks, some with white cortex
SN3 Z1	Small end scraper, brown flint, Mesolithic?* Gunflint, matt black flint
SN3 Z2	Flake, red orange flint; crude gun flint
SN4 Z1	3 bladelets, brown to buff flint, Mesolithic; 2 flakes; 3 gravel flint; natural nodule
SN4 Z2	Core, white rolled cortex, single platform*
SN11 Z1	Blade, brown cortex, punch struck, Neolithic?* Blade, burnt; natural fragment; ?broken gun flint; fragment
SN11 Z2	Small core, white rolled cortex
SN12 Z2	Possible core
SN24 Z1	Irregular core, burnt*
SN42 Z1	Blade; chunk
SN42 Z2	Hammer stone; flake
SN44 Z1	2 lumps
SN47 Z1	Natural
SN48 Z2	Levallois flake (?), coarse white flint, possibly well patinated*; flake, worn brown
SN48 Z3	Core (flake), Neolithic?* 5 other pieces
SN48 Z4	Chip
SN51 Z1	Chunk
SN53 Z1	Crested blade, reddish flint; flint lump
SN84 Z1	Battered lump
SN84 Z3	Small core; large flake
SN84 Z4	Large flake
SN84 Z5	Knife or scraper, white rolled cortex, imported flint, Neolithic*
SN98 Z1	Flake
SN99 Z1	Chunk
SN100 Z1	Blade fragment; 3 smashed lumps
SN101 Z1	Lump of unworked flint, whitish rolled cortex
SN102 Z1	Core platform, burnt
SN103 Z1	Core, two platform, Neolithic?* 2 other pieces
SN109 Z1	Retouched blade, Neolithic?*
SN120 Z1	Flake
SN129 Z1	Crested blade, grey brown flint, with rolled patinated cortex*
SN131 Z1	Chunk
SN132 Z1	Lump
SN134 Z1	5 blades, brown flint, brown rolled cortex, Mesolithic or Neolithic
SN134 Z2	Core, dark brown flint, white cortex, single platform, Neolithic?* Core, whitish flint; core; struck fragment, white rolled cortex; natural fragment
SN137 Z1	Hammer stone or large end scraper, imported flint*
SN138 Z3	Blade, red brown flint, Mesolithic?

geology. The technological characteristics and the quality of the raw material of these pieces suggest a Neolithic date. A large abraded, bifacially worked core in coarse, white (patinated?) flint (SN48 Z2) shows surface preparation and the detachment of a large flake in the manner of the Palaeolithic Levallois technique. Although the piece is rather crudely fashioned, a Palaeolithic date cannot be ruled out.

Blades and flakes

Among the unretouched pieces are a number of blades. Some of these are small and possibly Mesolithic but a large punch struck blade from SN11 Z1, with punch preparation of the platform, is probably Neolithic.

There are two crested blade/ flakes from the preparation of a blade core.

Tools

The retouched tools are all scrapers. These include a particularly large end-scraper, with one side retouched as a knife, on good-quality dark brown flint (SN137 Z1), certainly an import and probably Late Neolithic. Two double-ended end-scrapers on blades (including SN2 Z1), a scraper on a core fragment (SN84 Z5) and a fragmentary retouched blade (SN139 Z1) are also probably Neolithic judging from the size and quality of the material.

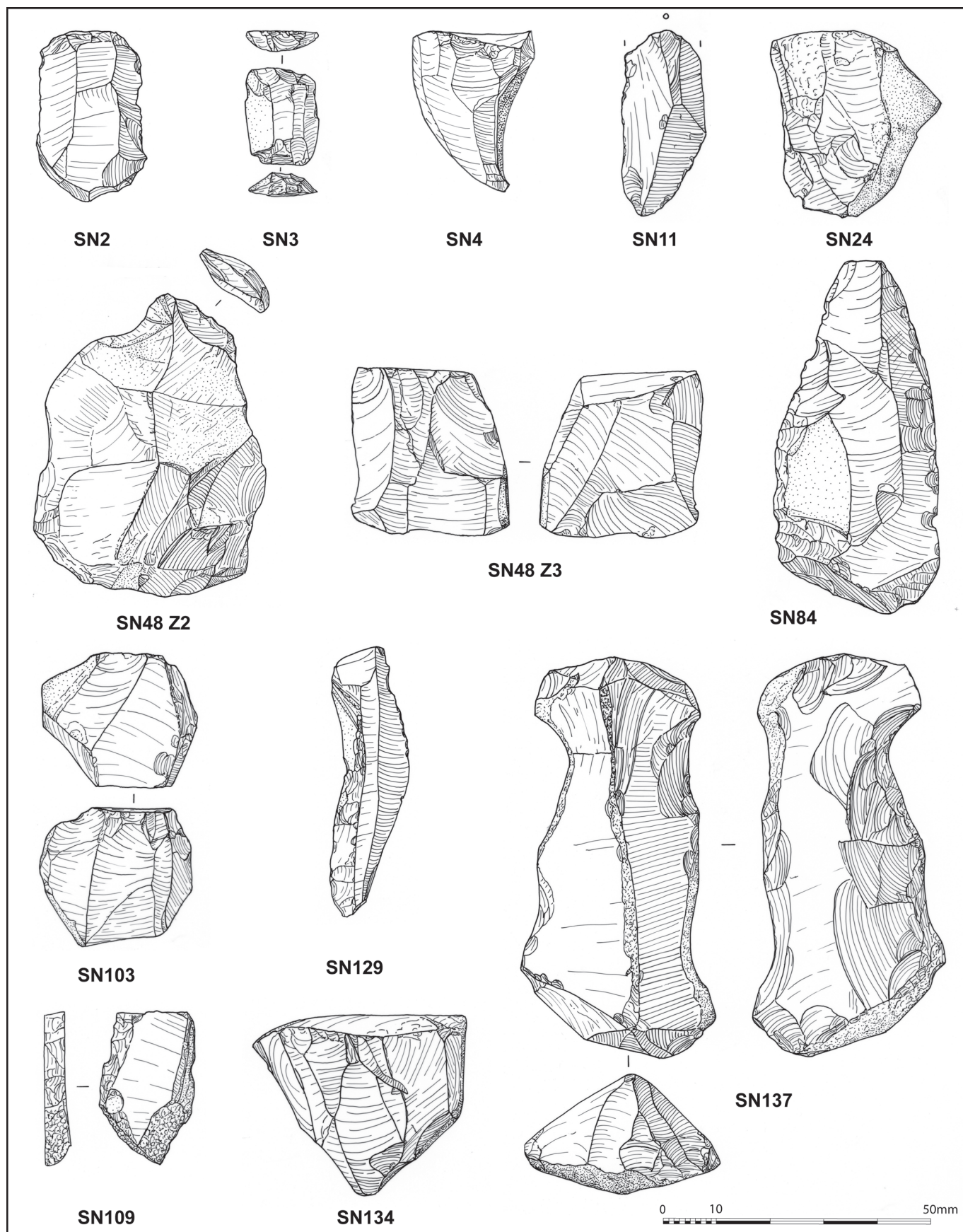


Fig 3 Sutton Coldfield survey: selected prehistoric worked flints

Table 2 Summary of the Roman pottery assemblage by area

Field No	Count	% Count	Wt. (g)	% Wt.	Average Wt.	Rim EVE	% Rim EVE
SN2	4	12.9%	51	9.2%	13	9	15.5%
SN3	3	9.7%	27	4.9%	9	0	0.0%
SN4	3	9.7%	79	14.2%	26	3	5.2%
SN10	1	3.2%	11	2.0%	11	0	0.0%
SN12	3	9.7%	68	12.3%	23	9	15.5%
SN71	1	3.2%	1	0.2%	1	0	0.0%
SN82	1	3.2%	7	1.3%	7	0	0.0%
SN84	1	3.2%	10	1.8%	10	0	0.0%
SN103	2	6.5%	48	8.6%	24	7	12.1%
SN112	3	9.7%	97	17.5%	32	13	22.4%
SN128	2	6.5%	9	1.6%	5	0	0.0%
SN130	2	6.5%	37	6.7%	19	8	13.8%
SN131	2	6.5%	53	9.5%	27	0	0.0%
SN132	2	6.5%	38	6.8%	19	9	15.5%
SN148	1	3.2%	19	3.4%	19	0	0.0%
Total	31		555		18	58	

Four complete or fragmentary gun flints are of an irregular type and could date to any period between the 17th and 19th centuries. One is on imported black flint but the others are probably local materials.

Conclusion

The surface collection clearly accumulated over a long period of time and is comparable to a certain extent with that derived from surface collection elsewhere in the midlands. It includes a possible Palaeolithic piece, some rather atypical Mesolithic material, a greater representation of Neolithic pieces, probably late Neolithic and a scatter of gun flints. The presence of more Neolithic than Mesolithic material is perhaps unusual for the west midlands, although it would be unwise to draw too firm conclusions from this small sample.

ROMANO-BRITISH POTTERY

by C Jane Evans

Introduction

Fieldwalking produced a total of 31 sherds of Romano-British pottery, weighing 555g. The pottery came from fifteen collection zones, none of which produced more than a few sherds (Table 2). The small assemblage provides evidence for limited Roman activity in the area, and some evidence for dating.

Methodology

The pottery was recorded in detail with the same recording system used for the Barston fieldwalking assemblage (Evans 2008), derived from the Birmingham Archaeology recording system. Where possible, fabric codes were cross-referenced with the National Roman Fabric Reference Collection (NRFRC: Tomber & Dore 1998), though most fabrics were too local for inclusion in the national series. Precise form types and broad vessel classes (for example bowl, flagon, mortarium) were recorded, where identifiable. Evidence of manufacture (wasters), use (sooting) and repair (rivets and rivet holes) was sought, but none was noted. This may partly reflect the fact that the assemblage was very abraded. A few diagnostic forms provided dating evidence for activity on the site. None justify illustration. The assemblage was quantified by sherd count, weight and rim EVE. Data for base EVEs are recorded in the archive. The data were analysed using a Microsoft Access 2007 database and a Microsoft Office Excel 2007 spreadsheet. Copies of these are included in the archive.

Fabrics

A narrow range of fabrics was recorded (Table 3, Table 4), with most of the coarsewares probably being fairly local products. Such a small assemblage, with so few sherds coming from any single field, does not justify any detailed statistical analysis. Nor can any significance be drawn from the absence of particular

Table 3 Roman pottery: list of fabrics represented

Archive Fabric code	Common Name	Description/references (T&D = National Roman Fabric Series code, Tomber and Dore 1998)
F011	Grog	Wheelmade? Pale cream/buff grog tempered ware, uncertain source
G04	Reduced Severn Valley ware	Wheelmade. Reduced variant of O02.1 below. Wheelmade, hard. Grey (2.5YR 5/1) core and grey (2.5YR 6/1) margins/surfaces.
O06.01	Oxidized ware, sandy	Wheelmade. Abundant, well-sorted fine quartz, with sparse black organic? Inclusions. A coarser variant of G05.2. Yellowish red (5YR 5/8)
O06.19		Wheelmade. Sparse organics? And ill-sorted, rounded quartz, a variant of G05.2.
O02.1	Oxidized Severn Valley ware	SVW OX 2 T&D, 148-149, pl 122: Plain, unsourced: Variations occur in this fabric: it may include rare, well-rounded grog (0.02mm) or rare, poorly-sorted and angular grog (1mm); there may also be variations in the level of micaceousness.
O02.14		With distinctive black, streaky iron rich inclusions (c.f. fabric W16 below). Reddish yellow surfaces and margins (5YR 6/6) with a reduced core, brown (7.5YR 5/4) to brownish gray (10YR 6/2)
O03.1		Organic tempered variant
M02	Mancetter Hartshill mort.	MAH WH, T&D, 189, pl 157a-d
P01	Mancetter Hartshill white	MAH WH, T&D, 189, pl 157a-d
P0	Unidentified white ware	

Table 4 Roman pottery: quantification of the assemblage by fabric

Fabric Name	Count	% Count	Wt. (g)	% Wt.	Average Wt.	Rim EVE	% Rim EVE
F0	1	3.2%	7	1.3%	7.0	0	0.0%
F011	1	3.2%	7	1.3%	7.0	0	0.0%
G04	1	3.2%	11	2.0%	11.0	0	0.0%
M02	12	38.7%	366	65.9%	30.5	44	75.9%
O02.1	6	19.4%	87	15.7%	14.5	3	5.2%
O02.14	3	9.7%	22	4.0%	7.3	0	0.0%
O03.1	1	3.2%	4	0.7%	4.0	0	0.0%
O06.01	1	3.2%	1	0.2%	1.0	0	0.0%
O06.19	3	9.7%	43	7.7%	14.3	11	19.0%
P01	2	6.5%	7	1.3%	3.5	0	0.0%
Total	31		555		17.9	58	

fabrics, such as samian or Black burnished ware. The most common wares were Mancetter-Hartshill mortaria, found in a number of fields (002, 003, 004, 012, 103, 112, 130, 148), and a range of Severn Valley ware fabrics.

Dating

There were sufficient forms to suggest some date ranges for the limited activity indicated (Table 5). The best dating evidence came from the Mancetter-Hartshill mortaria all of which, where trituration grits were present, had the black and brown grits typical of vessels produced post-AD 130/140. The presence

of reeded hammerhead mortaria, Alcester type E, suggested a 3rd- to 4th-century date (Booth 1994, 134), while bead and flange mortaria were indicative of a 2nd-century, broadly Antonine, date (Tyers 1996, 123-4, fig 119 no 4).

MEDIEVAL AND POST-MEDIEVAL POTTERY

by Stephanie Rátkai

Introduction

The medieval pottery was examined under $\times 20$

Table 5 Summary of dating evidence by field and collection zone

Field No	Collection zone	Date	Evidence
SN2	Z1	3rd to 4th century	M02 Reeded hammerhead mortarium, O02.1 Hooked rim jar
SN3	Z1	Roman	
SN4	Z1	Antonine	M02 Bead and flange
SN4	Z2	130+	M02 grits
SN10	Z1	Roman	
SN12	Z1	1st to 2nd century	O03.1
SN12	Z2	3rd century	M02 Reeded hammerhead mortarium with brown paint
SN71	Z1	Roman	
SN82	Z1	Roman	
SN84	Z3	Roman	
SN103	Z1	3rd to 4th century	M02 Reeded hammerhead mortarium
SN112	Z2	130+	M02 grits
SN112	Z2	3rd to 4th century	M02 Reeded hammerhead mortarium
SN112	Z4	3rd century?	M02 Hammerhead with bead rim
SN128	Z1	Roman	
SN130	Z1	3rd to 4th century	M02 Reeded hammerhead mortarium
SN131	Z1	Roman	
SN132	Z1	Roman	

magnification and divided into fabrics and the post-medieval pottery divided into wares. These were then compared with the Warwickshire County Pottery Type Series (WCTS: Soden & Rátkai 1998) and with the fabrics recorded during excavations in advance of the construction of the M6 Toll (Rátkai 2008a). The pottery was quantified by sherd and rim count and by sherd weight. Where possible the sherds were assigned to form. All data are stored on Excel.

The results of the fieldwalking are presented in a series of five tables, each representing a separate fieldwalked area, with each area subdivided into field units. In general, the common name for each fabric or ware has been used. The two exceptions are the whitewares (mid-13th to 14th centuries) and the late, oxidized wares (15th to 16th centuries). In the case of the former, the WCTS codes have been used so that direct comparison can be made with the data obtained from the M6 Toll. Fabric WW07 is the only whiteware fabric not in the Warwickshire Pottery Type Series but was found on the M6 Toll at Shenstone to the north of the survey area. The 15th- to 16th-century oxidized wares are also recorded by WCTS fabric codes (fabrics SLM10, SLM20 etc). In the report itself both sets of fabrics are referred to generically as whitewares and late red wares respectively.

Pottery overview

The earliest possible post-Roman pottery was represented

by Coventry-type ware cooking pots, which have a date range of 12th to 13th centuries and which formed about 1% by sherd count and by sherd weight. The assemblage as a whole was dominated by whitewares, dating from the mid-13th to 14th centuries, which made up 34% by count and 37% by weight. Only two sherds were identified as red-painted whiteware. Other iron-poor wares with buff or pinkish fabrics formed a further 3% by count and 1.4% by weight. These fabrics have a date from the mid-13th to 15th centuries. Chilvers Coton C ware (Mayes & Scott 1984) was the second best-represented fabric and dates primarily to the 14th to 15th/16th centuries. Pottery from Birmingham was represented by sherds of Deritend cooking pot and reduced Deritend ware (Rátkai 2009).

Material dating from the 15th to 16th centuries formed just under 13% and 15% by sherd count and sherd weight respectively. Some of this pottery is paralleled at Wednesbury to the west of the survey area (eg Hodder & Glazebrook 1987) and some probably represents late production at Chilvers Coton. Post-medieval pottery, here classed as anything post-dating the mid-16th century, formed about a quarter of the pottery recovered but was not systematically collected. None of the pottery recorded is likely to post-date the mid-18th century. The sources for most of this pottery are indeterminate, apart from one sherd from a North French, Martincamp flask (see Hurst *et al* 1986) which was found on the edge of the fieldwalked area, to the south of Kingsbury Road in Field 44 Z1. A possible

blackware waster and an overfired or burnt ?blackware sherd both from Field 4 Z1, a waster or heavily burnt cistercian/blackware mug sherd from Field 137 Z3 and a jug waster of indeterminate fabric from Field 18, may hint at some local production.

There are no discernible breaks in the pottery sequence which appears to run from the 13th century to the early/mid-18th century.

Vessel function

It was not possible to assign all the sherds to form, due to the fragmentary and abraded nature of some of the pottery, much of it medieval or late medieval in date. The following forms were noted amongst the whiteware: cooking pots (the most numerous), jugs, bowls and pipkins. The cooking pots and pipkins had the squared rims seen on other assemblages in the area (Rátkai 2001; 2008b, 415 fig 186, 20–23, 28, 32, 34). A squared collar rim (like Rátkai 2008b, fig 186, 32) was impressed along its lower edge giving a slightly frilled appearance. This is certainly not a common feature of whitewares. The bowls had a flange rim, sometimes tapering at the rim tip.

Amongst the late medieval pottery there was a stabbed ‘pan handle’, probably from a pipkin or possibly a skillet. The remaining 15th- to 16th-century pottery consisted of bowls, jars, cisterns (bung-hole jars) and jugs. This is a typical range of forms for this period. From the late 15th or early 16th centuries this range of forms was expanded by the addition of pottery drinking vessels in cistercian ware and blackware. Drinking vessels in the latter fabric continued to play an important part in the 17th century.

By the second half of the 17th century, the utilitarian repertoire of bowls and jars had been augmented by slipware bowls and platters for use at table. One specialized cooking vessel was found a yellow ware tripod pipkin. Two possible chamber pots were identified.

The vessel forms and their relative proportions in all periods are entirely within the range that would be expected in this area of the west midlands on a rural site.

Spatial analysis (Tables 6–10)

There are two main concentrations of pottery, both lying on the same vertical axis, defined by Grove

Lane and Wiggins Hill Road, to the east of the A38, and closer to Wishaw and Minworth Greaves than to Sutton Coldfield. The first of these, Group 1, lies to the west of Grove Lane, between Bull’s Lane and Ox Leys Road (Fields 2 and 3). The second, Group 2, lies in an area defined by Wiggins Hill Road to the west and the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal to the south (Field 10). A smaller concentration of post-medieval pottery, Group 3, was noted to the south of the canal and to the north of Kingsbury Road (Field 1, Z1–2).

GROUP 1 (TABLE 6)

This group is concentrated in Fields 2 Z1 and 3 Z1, immediately to the west of Grove Lane. The pottery is primarily medieval, with one post-medieval sherd. All but five of the 56 sherds were medieval whitewares with a date range of *c* 1250 to 1400. Cooking pots, jugs and bowls were represented and a pipkin with an incised wavy line on the rim. A large jug sherd of possible Chilvers Coton C fabric (Mayes & Scott 1984) was found and a late medieval glazed sherd and two small medieval glazed jug sherds. The Chilvers Coton jug sherd weighed 82g and contained part of the rim and of a broad, slashed strap handle. A 14th-century date is likely for this sherd. The late medieval jug sherd could date to the 15th or 16th centuries. The post-medieval sherd was from a yellow ware bowl and dates to the 17th to early 18th centuries. A small scatter of medieval and post-medieval pottery occurs in fields immediately to the west. Further whiteware sherds were found here but also more post-medieval sherds in Field 4 Z1. A Coventry ware cooking pot sherd, dating to the 12th to 13th centuries, was found in Field 4 Z2. Of interest were two over-fired blackware sherds from this area. There is a possibility that both sherds were wasters. Further north of Group 1 in Field 134 Z1 was a crucible fragment. The form and fabric suggest a late medieval or post-medieval date (see Bayley 1992, figs 5–6). A second possible crucible fragment was found to the north of Ox Leys Road in Field 102 Z1. Industrial waste was used as ‘hardcore’ or for drainage in rural areas but the overall paucity of pottery in general and industrial waste in particular may indicate the genuine erstwhile presence of metal working in this area.

The pottery in Group 1 is probably associated with the moated site in Over Green, at the junction of Bull’s Lane and Grove Lane, or possibly with settlement on Church Lane north-east of Grove End, where Hodder (1992a) found evidence of 13th- to 14th-century settlement. It should be noted, however, that the area

Table 6 Medieval and Post-medieval pottery Group 1. Area bordered by A38, Ox Leys Road and Bulls Lane

	42(1)		42(2)		135(1)		134(1)		3(2)		3(1)		2(1)		4(1)		4(2)		133(2)		133(1)		43(1)		132(1)		131(1)		130(1)	
Fabric/ware	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght
Coventry-type ware																	1	8			1	7								
WCTS WW01.3			1	13			1	15			9	69	5	31							1	7								
WCTS WW01.4			1	12			6	59	1	4	12	86	4	34	1	3							1	10						
WCTS WW03											1	13																		
WW07					1	5	4	24	1	3	2	4	17	181	2	13							1	15						
Cannon Park ware					1	8					2	12	1	5																
Chilvers Coton C	1	5											1	82																
Chilvers Coton C?	1	1					1	11																						
WCTS SLM10																					1	13								
WCTS SLM10?																			1	5									1	2
WCTS SLM14.1																	1	8									1	20		
Midlands Purple mpblw (waster?)			1	15											2	21														
Blackware			1	13											1	18														
Yellow ware													1	5							1	12	1	11						
Coarseware	1	31													1	21														
Slip-coated ware															1	2														
Post-medieval unknown													1	8												1	3			
Crucible							1	50																						
Waster?															1	5														
Total	3	37	4	53	2	13	13	159	2	7	26	184	30	346	11	114	2	16	1	5	3	32	3	36	1	3	1	20	1	2

around Peddimore Hall, further west, to the north of Field 14, was entirely bereft of pottery, so there is no certain concordance with moated sites and surrounding pottery scatters.

GROUP 2 (TABLE 7)

Twenty sherds were found in Field 10 Z1 with a further three in Field 10 Z2. The pottery was rather more mixed than that found in Group 1. Several Chilvers Coton C sherds were present and a Chilvers Coton B jug sherd. Whiteware sherds were in the minority and late medieval wares (15th to 16th centuries) such as Midlands Purple ware and late red wares were much better represented. There was one Coventry ware cooking pot sherd.

Group 2 lies to the south of Wiggins Hill Farm. Several of the sherds are far too large to be from manuring scatters and suggest that there was medieval occupation in this area from the later 13th to 16th centuries. Other scatters north of the farm (Fields 12 Z1–2, 24 Z1 and 128 Z1) may be connected with it also or possibly with Wiggins Hill Cottages, which may also stand on the site of earlier buildings. Again there are sufficient large sherds in these fields, including a 30g reduced Deritend ware jug sherd dating to the 13th century (Rátkai 2009), to suggest that they represent occupation debris rather than manuring scatters.

GROUP 3 (TABLE 8)

This group, containing seventeen sherds, was different again from the preceding groups. Given the much smaller area of Field 1 Z1–2, the pottery is much more concentrated. There were only two medieval whiteware sherds and one late medieval sherd. The rest of the pottery was post-medieval and dated to the 17th to 18th centuries. Two possible sherds from a blackware chamber pot were found in Field 1 Z3. The post-medieval forms consisted primarily of bowls and drinking vessels which is fairly typical of the period. A second possible chamber pot, in slip-coated ware, was found in Z1.

The greater part of the area fieldwalked produced little or no medieval or post-medieval pottery (see Tables 9 and 10). The area to the north of Ox Leys Road (Table 9), and the area to the west of the A38, and to the east, bordered by Wishaw Lane (Fields 48, 103 etc), were particularly poor in pottery (Table 10). The pottery finds were so infrequent in these areas as to make analysis impossible, other than to say that the paucity of ceramics is consistent with a primarily pastoral use for the fields here in the past. The numerous moated sites in the survey area are also consistent with pastoral farming or assarted woodland. This contrasts with Barston (Rátkai 2008d) further to the south but is similar to the density of medieval pottery observed by the author during the Wroxeter Hinterlands Survey

Table 7 Medieval and Post-medieval pottery Group 2. Area bordered by A38, Bulls Lane and Birmingham and Fazeley Canal

	18(1)		48(3)		48(2)		128(2)		128(1)		12(1)		12(2)		11(2)		11(1)		10(1)		10(2)		24(1)	
Fabric/ware	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght
waster	1	11																						
Coventry-type ware																	1	3	1	9				
Coventry-type ware (glazed)															1	8								
WCTS WW01.4							1	23											3	14	1	20		
WCTS WW01.3													1	5					2	23	1	24	3	30
WCTS WW07									1	5	1	12	1	9	1	7	1	12			1	4		
WCTS WW03											1	18												
Deritend ware									1	4														
Reduced Deritend ware													1	40										
Cannon Park ware																			2	33			2	17
Chilvers Coton B																			1	10				
Chilvers Coton C													4	53					6	81			3	14
Chilvers Coton C?							1	7	1	5									1	2				
Iron-poor gritty ware																			1	1				
SLM10?					1	11					2	29	1	11			1	19	1	30				
SLM14.1													1	8									1	7
SLM11																			1	21				
SLM10?																	1	4						
Midlands Purple									1	21									1	11				
Cistercian ware															1	9								
Cistercian ware/blackware																		2	5					
Blackware													1	7			3	6						
Midlands purple/coarseware			1	36									1	28										
coarseware/flowerpot											1	34												
Total	1	11	1	36	1	11	2	30	4	35	5	93	11	161	3	24	9	49	20	235	3	48	9	68

Table 8 Medieval and Post-medieval pottery Group 3. Area south of the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal

	1(1)		1(2)		1(3)		44(1)	
Fabric/ware	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght
WCTS WW01.4	1	8						
WW07	1	2						
WCTS SLM10?	1	6						
Martincamp I							1	9
Blackware	5	47			2	18		
Yellow ware	2	23	1	2				
Coarseware	1	45						
Mottled ware	1	2						
Slip-coated ware	3	44	1	2				
Total	15	177	2	4	2	18	1	9

(Gaffney *et al* 2007), an area thought to be primarily pastoral.

The data in context

Several areas in close proximity to the survey area have been the subject of archaeological investigation. Within the survey area, a small excavation by Warwickshire Museum took place at Pool Hall in 2007 (Rátkai 2011). Previously, in 1992, Hodder published the results of fieldwalking in 1980–81, on the east side of Over Green (in Wishaw parish), to the west of a moated site at Hermitage Farm in Over Green, and to the north-east of Grove End (in Wishaw parish) (Hodder 1992a). A small excavation took place at Minworth Greaves, to the south of the fieldwalked area (Rátkai 2001) and two larger sites at Wishaw Hall Farm were excavated in advance of the construction of the M6 Toll Motorway (Rátkai 2008b). Work at Coleshill (Rátkai 2008c) and Solihull (Rátkai 2003) and on the Solihull pipeline (Rátkai 2004) has provided comparanda from more peripheral areas.

Hodder (1992a, 45; 1988, 213) found concentrations of ‘buff-whitewares’ at Over Green, Grove End and Wiggins Hill, which he considered to be evidence of domestic occupation, rather than manuring scatters. At

Table 9 Medieval and Post-medieval pottery. Area to the north of Ox Leys Road

	159 (1)		155 (1)		146 (2)		141 (2)		99 (1)		53 (1)		111 (1)		111 (2)		112 (5)		126 (1)		100 (1)		102 (1)	
Fabric/ware	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght
WCTS WW01.4															1	2			1	5				
WW07																			1	7				
Chilvers Coton C?																					1	5		
Deritend ware					1	3																		
Blackware							1	14							1	5	1	5						
Yellow ware			1	47									1	18	1	10								
Coarseware											1	11												
Mottled ware					1	13																		
Slipware (3 colour)	2	12																						
Slipware (jewelled)									1	14														
Crucible																							1	8
Total	2	12	1	47	2	16	1	14	1	14	1	11	1	18	3	17	1	5	2	12	1	5	1	8

Pool Hall the assemblage was small (75 sherds) and just under two-thirds of the pottery was post-medieval in date. Every group seemed either to have been disturbed or redeposited in some way, which reduced the scope for detailed analysis. However, medieval whitewares were not dominant and they were easily outnumbered by Coventry-type ware cooking pots and other sandy cooking pot of a similar date. At the most basic level, the pottery indicated that there had been fairly continuous occupation in the area from the 12th or 13th centuries through to the 19th century.

At Minworth Greaves, whitewares were dominant and of these about 55% by sherd count, 42% by sherd weight, were red-painted whitewares, a type which is poorly represented amongst the fieldwalk pottery, although this may be in part due to the high level of abrasion which has removed much of the sherd surfaces. The whiteware vessel forms are made up of mainly jugs and bowls. However, many of the bowls were sooted, some heavily, suggesting that they were used primarily for cooking. Heavy abrasion, particularly to the inner surfaces, indicates that they were well used. The two excavated sites at Wishaw Hall Farm once more point to the importance of whitewares in the medieval ceramic assemblage. At these sites, whiteware forms comprised bowls, jugs, cooking pots and pipkins.

The fieldwalk pottery fits very neatly into the picture of ceramic usage presented by the above sites. The

significance of this picture is discussed in detail by Rátkai (2008a, 501) where it is suggested that a distinct ‘ceramic zone’ exists which stretches from Solihull/Barston/Coleshill to Lichfield and that there is a strong likelihood of a whiteware production centre located somewhere within the triangular area bordered by Lichfield, Walsall and Minworth Greaves or Coleshill. The earliest pottery in this zone, at least in Warwickshire, appears to have been supplied from the Coventry area but this was superseded by whitewares which were dominant from about 1275–1400. Continued contact with markets in Coventry and Birmingham in this period are probably evidenced by the presence of Chilvers Coton C ware (via Coventry) and by Deritend wares from Birmingham.

The late medieval and post-medieval pottery is also similar, both in fabric/ware types and vessel form, to pottery recorded in the medieval ceramic zone outlined above. The possible post-medieval wasters may hint at some local pottery production. In this context an oval hollow and ramp in Over Green, which has been identified as a possible post-medieval clay pit (Birmingham Hist Environ Rec, MBM 1888), may be significant.

DISCUSSION

In contrast to Barston, where the archaeological information recovered by field survey represents

Table 10 Medieval and Post-medieval pottery. Area bordered by A38 and Ox Leys Road

	51(1)		149(1)		86(1)		83(1)		84(1)		84(3)		138(1)		138(2)		138(3)		137(2)		137(3)		47(1)	
Fabric/ware	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght	count	wght
Coventry-type ware																							1	8
WCTS Sq04							1	5																
WCTS WW01.4			1	11	1	4													1	12			1	7
WCTS WW01.3																							1	10
WW07											2	25							1	4				
WCTS WW03															1	5								
WCTS SLM10?																							1	11
WCTS SLM14.1																							1	14
WCTS SLM13																							1	10
WCTS SLM11																							1	8
WCTS SLM20																					1	10		
Cistercian/blackware																					1	5		
Blackware	1	3											3	13										
Yellow ware	1	3			1	5	1	8					2	10			1	3			1	10	1	6
Coarseware									1	4														
Slip-coated ware													1	8										
Pipeclay figurine			1	14																				
Total	2	6	2	25	2	9	2	13	1	4	2	25	6	31	1	5	1	3	2	16	3	25	8	74

virtually all of the archaeological record because there had been no previous work and there has as yet been little subsequent work, the results from the Sutton survey provide a landscape context to the results of site specific work carried out before and after the survey. They also enable an assessment of the archaeological potential of the survey area as a whole.

In general, the distribution of prehistoric worked flint found in the survey is consistent with the general spread of this material found in field survey elsewhere in the west midlands (Barfield 2007), but it is unusual in being predominantly late Neolithic in type rather than Mesolithic. In previous fieldwalking, small quantities of prehistoric worked flint were found around Wiggins Hill, Over Green and Grounds Farm, corresponding to concentrations of worked flint found in the survey; at Manorial Wood to the north; and in Middleton and Wishaw to the east (Hodder 1988; 1992a). At Wishaw Hall Farm, near a group of 25 worked flints found in fieldwalking, excavation revealed an assemblage of over 1,500 pieces of worked flint of late Mesolithic type (Trevvarthen 2008, 359), and some of the groups of worked flint found in fieldwalking in the survey

area may similarly be the surface indications of larger assemblages. Although the total quantity of flint is relatively small, its extent across the survey area tends to contradict assertions of a relative lack of early prehistoric activity in those parts of the west midlands which apparently lack monuments characteristic of the Neolithic and early Bronze Age (eg Garwood 2011, 9–11).

The discovery of burnt mounds demonstrates that the density of such sites in the survey area is likely to be similar to that in south Birmingham, where most of the known burnt mounds were visible as exposures of heat-shattered stones in stream banks and were found by systematic stream walking in open spaces within built-up areas (Barfield & Hodder 2011). Within the survey area, subsequent excavation in advance of construction of the M6 Toll motorway showed that the burnt stones recorded in a stream bank on Langley Brook were actually derived from the erosion of a burnt mound 200m upstream, just over the border in Warwickshire, and another burnt mound was found on Collets Brook to the north. These sites produced radiocarbon dates ranging from 1870–1390 cal BC (Fitzpatrick 2008,

506–8). Burnt stones in a former stream channel at Peddimore (Mould 1998, 39) probably indicate the location of another burnt mound, not far from that found on the Hurst Brook near Wiggins Hill in the survey. Another burnt mound, which survives as a mound visible on the surface, was found in 2007 in New Hall Valley to the west (Nichol 2007), and taken together this cluster of sites lies between previously recorded burnt mounds at Berwood and Sutton Park to the south-west and north-west respectively, and Middleton Park and Middleton New Park to the east (Fitzpatrick 2008, fig 215). The burnt mounds are likely to indicate the general location and therefore the potential density of contemporary settlements (Barfield & Hodder 2011, 42); other than burnt mounds, most of the evidence for this period in the immediate vicinity of the survey area consists of chance finds of metalwork, but the contents of a group of pits at Hints to the north included a cremation dated to 1540–1410 cal BC, together with burnt stones and Bronze Age pottery (Krawiec *et al* 2010).

Very little prehistoric pottery has been found in the vicinity of the survey area. Some probable Iron Age pottery was found in fieldwalking in the former Drayton Park at Drayton Bassett to the north (Hodder 1990), and within the survey area the excavation of an Iron Age settlement at Langley Mill Farm produced only 20 sherds of pottery, so when its friability and poor survival in ploughsoil are taken into account as well it is not surprising that it is not found in fieldwalking. However, the probable Roman settlements inferred from pottery distributions in the survey area could have had Iron Age antecedents like the sites at Langley Mill Farm and Wishaw Hall Farm. Only one of the two Iron Age enclosures at Langley Mill Farm was visible as a cropmark on aerial photographs: the other was revealed only by topsoil stripping. Cropmarks east of Webster Way, and just south of Field 137 (Fig 1), show a small rectangular enclosure, with possibly another nearby, which may be late prehistoric in date (Birmingham City Council 2013, 10), as may some of the apparent enclosures visible as cropmarks which were located in a search of aerial photographs of the survey area in 1999 by Helen Goodchild (unpublished: information in Birmingham Historic Environment Record), and an apparent two-phase sub-rectangular enclosure at Spreading Tree Hill to the north of the survey area (Birmingham City Council 2013, 10). Just outside the eastern boundary of the survey area, at Over Green in Wishaw parish, enclosures and pit alignments are visible as cropmarks on aerial photographs. Survival

of prehistoric features in the survey area is indicated by the results of evaluation trenching to the south and east of Peddimore Hall, which revealed ditches and gullies, probably prehistoric in date, related to former stream channels and sealed by alluvium (Mould 1998).

Although very little Roman pottery was found in fieldwalking in this survey, its distribution and that of the similarly small quantities of Roman pottery found in fieldwalking within and adjoining the survey area in 1980–81 (when the largest concentration was found around Grounds Farm: Hodder 1992a) tend to support previous suggestions that there were Roman settlements at Wiggins Hill and Over Green, that the land unit identifiable as the medieval estate of Wiggins Hill could be Roman in origin, and that the Burrels field system was farmed during the Roman period, probably from a settlement at Over Green. There may also have been a Roman settlement on the south side of the Burrels, at or near Fairview Farm (fieldwalking zones 130, 131 and 132). The earthwork banks recorded south of Bulls Lane suggest that the Burrels field system extended further south and possibly even determined the alignment of medieval open-field furlongs around Wiggins Hill. The discovery of small quantities of Roman pottery at Fox Hollies, Brockhurst Farm and Springfield Farm shows that land there was being farmed in the Roman period, suggesting the existence of settlements nearby, but the absence of Roman pottery from either fieldwalking or extensive evaluation trenching in the vicinity of Peddimore suggests that this relatively poorly drained land was not arable but was either woodland, which may have been grazed as wood pasture, or grassland managed as hay meadow and seasonally grazed.

The Roman settlements are likely to have been similar to those excavated at Langley Mill Farm and Wishaw Hall Farm on the M6 Toll (sites 19 and 29: Booth 2008, 519–20; Powell & Ritchie 2008; Trevarthen 2008). Strangely, no Roman pottery was found in fieldwalking at Langley Mill Farm on the site subsequently excavated, possibly due to the relatively small quantity of Roman pottery on the site and possibly because pottery in features was not being incorporated into the ploughsoil. Excavations here (M6 Toll Site 29, ‘North of Langley Mill’) revealed at least five large roughly rectilinear ditched enclosures, mainly mid-2nd to early 3rd century in date and developed in at least two phases, adjacent to the Iron Age enclosed farmstead mentioned above. There were also probable ditched droveways and a

small rectangular timber building. Analysis of vessel types in the total of 745 sherds of Roman pottery found at this site suggests a settlement of modest status. The excavated evidence suggests that, as in some other parts of the west midlands, relatively small quantities of pottery were used on rural settlements in the survey area in the Roman period (eg Gaffney *et al* 2007; White & Hodder forthcoming). This is in turn reflected in the quantities found in fieldwalking and it highlights the consequent significance of relatively small concentrations.

At Wishaw Hall Farm (M6 Toll Site 19), just east of the survey area, a Roman field boundary follows a two-phase Iron Age boundary. A rectangular enclosure to the south was constructed in the middle of the 2nd century, with occupation continuing through the 3rd century and into the 4th. There was a driveway to the north of the enclosure. The proportion of fine wares in the 823 sherds of pottery from this site suggests that it had a relatively high status.

The Roman pottery used at these sites and at other postulated settlements in the survey area included the products of local kilns including that at Sherifoot Lane in Sutton Coldfield to the north-west of the survey area, which made jars, tankards and carinated bowls (Evans *et al* 2014). This site is over 2 km east of the nearest known Roman road, 'Ryknield Street', but near a medieval road line which follows a natural ridge and could have been in use much earlier (Hodder 2004, 63).

No pottery or any other objects dating from the 5th to 12th century have been found in the survey area, but early Anglo-Saxon pottery is relatively rare in much of the west midlands and even middle and later Anglo-Saxon pottery is rare outside towns and high-status settlements in the region, suggesting that little or even no pottery was used in many rural settlements (eg Hooke 2011, 155–6), therefore its absence cannot be taken to indicate a lack of occupation in this period. A settlement at Wiggins Hill implied by its Domesday Book entry is likely to have originated before the Conquest. The apparent abandonment of the field system at the Burrels may relate to changes in land use or in intensity of land use, rather than abandonment of settlements: the Roman settlements suggested by pottery around medieval hamlets at Over Green and Wiggins Hill indicate that occupation of these sites may have been continuous thereafter, although not necessarily as more than a single farmstead, until the medieval period. References to assarting indicate that the abandoned earlier field system at the Burrels was

brought back into use. In addition, the alignment of the earthworks south of Bulls Lane suggest that they, and possibly the bank and ditch recorded in Fox Covert, may be part of the Burrels field system, but they may have been constructed in the medieval period around newly assarted land.

The earliest datable post-Roman material from the survey area is 12th- or 13th-century pottery. The medieval pottery found in fieldwalking in 1980–81 and in this project was predominantly whitewares of 13th- to 14th-century date. This fabric might be more easily seen in fieldwalking than darker-coloured fabrics but whitewares were also dominant in the assemblage from a pit excavated at Minworth Greaves Farm.

Concentrations of medieval pottery, in which the quantity and the sherd size suggest occupation nearby rather than manuring scatters, occurred between Over Green and Grove End and at Wiggins Hill. These coincide with the larger quantities of medieval pottery found in fieldwalking in Over Green and Wiggins Hill in 1980–81 which confirm that these were the location of medieval settlements. The 1980–81 fieldwalking located particular concentrations on the eastern side of Wiggins Hill Road opposite Wiggins Hill Farm and close to the earthworks recorded in 1969 which possibly related to a former settlement; to the west and east of Over Green; and in Grove End. The relatively small quantities of medieval pottery found elsewhere in the survey area are likely to be the result of manuring arable land with domestic debris and therefore show the location and extent of medieval arable land.

In addition to the pottery, other evidence for medieval settlement and land use in the survey area consists of earthworks of probable medieval date recorded in the survey, moated sites at Langley, Peddimore and Over Green which are assumed to be of medieval date, surviving buildings, and information derived from other projects. Earthworks include ridge and furrow, the driveways at Signal Hayes, the former dams and possible watermill sites at Langley, and various boundaries including that at Fox Covert. Medieval buildings at Minworth Greaves Farm, Forge Farm and The Grove, and that formerly at Minworth Greaves, have been described above. At Peddimore, extensive evaluation trenching revealed medieval field boundaries overlain by a later field system, and grubbed-out woodland (Mould 1998), and paddocks were found in excavation at Minworth Greaves (Warwickshire Mus Field Serv 1999).

Earthworks of probable post-medieval date recorded in the survey include the pit near Bricklyn Farm which may have originated as a clay pit providing the raw material for pottery production in the vicinity, which is suggested by blackware wasters, or for bricks as suggested by the name of the farm. Bricklyn may instead be derived from the name *Breclinrst* recorded in the vicinity in 1240 (Mason 1980; Roger Lea pers comm), but Brockhurst Farm, further north in the survey area, may derive its name from *Breclinrst*. The *brēc* element of the name means 'newly broken-in land' (Gelling 1984, 233) and is consistent with it being mentioned in relation to assarting in 1240. Brick and tile production at Barn Farm was specifically for use at that site rather than elsewhere. Other industrial activity in this area is indicated by the medieval or post-medieval crucible fragments. Although little building recording was carried out as part of the survey, previous and subsequent work on medieval and post-medieval buildings has been described above.

OVERVIEW AND FUTURE POTENTIAL

The early prehistoric finds from the survey demonstrate the extent of activity in the survey area over a long period of time and, as noted above, even quite small quantities of material may be the surface indications of more significant assemblages. From later prehistory, the burnt mounds are likely to be accompanied by associated features, possible examples of which were found in the evaluation at Peddimore, and there are likely to be more burnt mounds and more Iron Age settlement sites like those on the M6 Toll. The survey and other work has identified probable Roman settlements and even surviving field boundaries which are potentially of this date. Landscape features of medieval and post-medieval date surviving as earthworks have been located and some evidence for industrial activity was found.

It is important to emphasize that the evidence obtained by fieldwalking represents only a partial picture of past human activity in the survey area and the potential surviving archaeological remains of that activity. The distribution, quantity and type of material retrieved by this method is affected by the extent of fields actually walked (Figs 1 and 2: those fields not walked were inaccessible because they were not under arable cultivation, access was not permitted, or there was insufficient time to walk them), field conditions at the time of walking, and the variable visibility of objects of different sizes and colours (for example, lighter-coloured pottery such as Roman mortaria

and medieval whiteware may be seen more easily than darker-coloured fabrics). Alluvial or colluvial accumulation, such as the alluvium 30cm to 50cm thick overlying probable prehistoric features along former stream courses south of Peddimore Hall (Mould 1998), masks earlier surfaces and features, preventing objects contained in them from being incorporated into the ploughsoil.

Further work on individual sites and features could include detailed recording of earthworks; geophysical survey around burnt mounds and potential Roman and medieval settlements, together with searches of aerial photographs and LiDAR data. In the event of proposed development, geophysical survey and evaluation trenching would be required, including investigation of apparently blank areas, followed by more extensive excavation.

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