Bexhill to Hastings Link Road

Field Collection Survey

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Bexhill To Hastings Link Road

FIELD COLLECTION SURVEY

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SUMMARY

During March 2007 Oxford Archaeology (OA), on behalf of East Sussex County Council carried out a field collection survey (fieldwalking) on the proposed Bexhill to Hastings link road. The survey recovered an assemblage of flint artefacts dating from the Mesolithic, Neolithic and possibly Bronze Age. The majority of artefacts logged were fire cracked flint, these were identified in all the fields, with one slight concentration in Field 2. Preparation flakes were the most frequent artefact retained, but other notable finds include two blade tools, probably of Mesolithic or Neolithic date, and two side scrapers of possible Bronze Age and Neolithic date. One significant concentration of flint tools and fire cracked flint was identified in Field 5. These were of varying date and confirm the utilisation of this part of the area, a ridge of higher ground, during the prehistoric period.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 During March 2007 OA carried out a field collection survey between Bexhill and Hastings, East Sussex (Fig. 1), on behalf East Sussex County Council. This was carried out as part of a series of investigations to evaluate the archaeological potential of the area of the proposed Bexhill to Hastings link road.

1.1.2 The collection survey was carried out between the 12th and 16th March. A total of eleven fields (Fig. 2) on or close to the proposed route were suitable for surveying, equating to approximately 84 ha in total.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The study area is within an area known as the High Weald, which is typified by many minor valleys and ridges, arable fields and agriculturally unimproved pasture. The underlying solid geology is predominately floodplain deposits, laid down by rivers during the early Cretaceous period. At the base is the Ashdown Formation, with the Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation at the top (both of these consist of silty sands and sandstones, with lesser amounts of shale and clay). The Wadhurst Clay Formation, which is locally rich in ironstone, separates these two formations and collectively they are known as the Hastings Group.

1.2.2 The alluvium in the Combe Haven Valley can obscure archaeological features as well as protecting significant areas of prehistoric remains from later impacts such as development and ploughing. The lower levels of the Valley are a marshy, waterlogged area, and geo-technical test pitting has noted waterlogged deposits indicating that other organic remains could be preserved under anaerobic conditions.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1.1 The following historical and archaeological background has been reproduced directly from the Archaeological Desk Based Assessment for the project (Chris Blandford Associates 2004) and further details regarding the finds referred to can be found in that document.

Palaeolithic (500,000 – 8,500 BC)

2.1.2 With the notable exception of some sites in the alluvial and gravel deposits of the West Sussex coastal plain, Sussex in general is not generally a rich area for Palaeolithic finds. This is due in part to the lack of gravel extraction and disturbance of those deposits from which Palaeolithic tools are normally recovered (Leslie & Short 1999, 10). However, ESSMR records the site of a lower Palaeolithic handaxe that was found on the shore within the study area (AR 49), while a small cluster of

surface finds dating to the middle Palaeolithic were found to the west of the study area in Hastings (Leslie & Short 1999, 11).

Mesolithic (8500 – 3400 BC)

2.1.3 People were largely transient at the beginning of the Mesolithic. This has left few archaeological remains, with human activity being largely characterised by finds of flint tools and waste rather than structural remains. In the study area a tranchet axe dating to the Mesolithic was found close to Bexhill (AR 22), while a number of flintwork items characteristic of the period have been collected from the wider area, including finds from Bexhill town. It is likely that the Combe Haven River resources, including marshland, would have attracted transient Mesolithic communities and temporary camps on the higher ground may be located in the vicinity.

Neolithic (4000BC –2400 BC)

2.1.4 Evidence in the Sussex area, including monuments, settlement and finds, is focused on the lighter soils of the chalk downs. However, previous assumptions that, in contrast to the downs, the Weald had little or no activity during the Neolithic cannot be substantiated. While the lighter soils of the chalk downs may have been more attractive to the needs of arable agricultural communities than the heavier clay soils of the Weald, the lack of evidence in the Weald may be more to do with the lack of concerted archaeological investigation in this area and the masking effect that clay has upon archaeological cropmarks and earthworks, than a lack of Neolithic activity.

2.1.5 The recovery of a number of flintwork finds dating to the Neolithic, within the study area, confirms that there was activity in this area during this period. These finds include several flint axeheads (AR 5, 7 & 44), two arrowheads (AR 7 & 20) and a range of Neolithic scrapers, flint wasters and fire-cracked flints (AR 15 & 51). While the intensity of activity cannot be determined this period may have witnessed the clearance of small areas of the Weald woodland.

Bronze Age (2400 – 700 BC)

2.1.6 In the study area a concentration of evidence in the vicinity of Upper Wilting Farm (AR 51 & 57), including palaeo-environmental evidence indicating large scale Bronze Age activity and burning of the forest by humans (AR 56), suggests that there may have been a Bronze Age settlement in this area, possibly farming the higher ground overlooking the Combe Haven marshes. Other finds in the study area dating to this period include a looped and winged axe found at Galley Hill, Bexhill (AR 10) and a small Bronze Age hoard, found in 1869, which contained 3 palstaves, a portion of a fourth palstave and a bronze cake (AR 9).

2.1.7 Furthermore, in close proximity to the study area an early Bronze Age flint axe was discovered near Hastings (Leslie & Short 1999, 18). It is also possible that a number of the roads shown on the 1st edition OS, especially those routeways on the top of

ridges, are long lived and may date back to this period of formalisation of settlement in the Bronze Age (Figure 3.15), although there is no direct archaeological evidence to support this premise.

Iron Age (700 BC-43 AD)

2.1.8 As in the Neolithic and Bronze Age the majority of Iron Age evidence in Sussex is concentrated in the chalklands to the west of Eastbourne. The paucity of Iron Age evidence in the Weald is probably more a result of the limited archaeological investigation and the problems of detecting archaeology on the claylands, than the absence of archaeology.

2.1.9 While there is no significant evidence for settlement remains within the study area, it seems there is ample opportunity for the extraction and working of ironstone (Armstrong 1995 25-6) and a large proportion of the land on the valley headlands running around the Combe Haven Valley has the necessary geological makeup to allow this, including land from the north of Preston Hall around to St. Leonards, with a large block to the north of Pebsham Farm.

2.1.10 In the Weald, Iron Age settlement sites that have been excavated are usually related with the earliest known iron extraction and smelting sites. Combe Haven's catchment area contains several iron working sites, including Pepperingeye, Byne's Farm, Forewood and Crowhurst Park, the latter being a major centre for pre-Roman and Roman iron working. The Iron Age iron industry was relatively small scale but it is likely that these sites had associated settlement, as is suggested at Upper Wilting Farm where a small scatter of slag suggests iron working in the area (AR 51). A causeway dating to the Iron Age (AR 86), located at the southern limits of the ridge that Upper Wilting Farm stands on, reinforces the argument that there was focused activity in this area during the Iron Age. The development of the Wealden Iron industry, which began in this period, was an important factor in the utilisation and settlement of the study area from this period until the start of the post medieval. Palaeo-environmental work in 1988 and 1990 by Smyth and Jennings has identified environmental change within the Combe Haven Valley over the last 6000 years, with a major change around the Iron Age. Sediments deposited along the floodplain and valley sides in the Iron Age indicate an increase in colluvial (hillwash) and alluvial (river deposits) layers around the mid section of the valley. This has been interpreted as a result of human activity and corresponds with the vegetation history, which indicates forest clearance. Increase in cereal pollen recovered suggests the land was released to agriculture and archaeological remains of iron working sites suggest it may also have been used for industry (iron working). The constant use of the valley as indicated by paleoenvironmental remains led to a change in the lower valley environment. River discharge increased within the valley due to an increase in runoff and decrease in evapotranspiration. This led to the widening of the estuary and extended the tidal limit up to the lower valley. Smyth and Jennings define the lower valley on the basis of their pollen site, CH2 (1990) the northern boundary of Pebsham Landfill Site. It is unclear whether the colluviation took place as a single event or as a

sequence of events, however due to the deposits good conditions for preservation there is a high potential to contain archaeological remains.

Roman (AD 43 – 410)

2.1.11 There are few settlement sites in the study area and large areas of the Weald appear devoid of farmsteads or settlement activity. This was previously believed to be due to the heavy soils of the area or because the area was still heavily wooded, but prehistoric activity in the area (see above) shows that people did settle in the area and the paucity of evidence is more likely to be linked with the lack of archaeological fieldwork in the area and the difficulty of identifying archaeological sites on clay.

2.1.12 This bias seems to be confirmed by the fact that there is a concentration of finds around Bexhill suggesting settlement (Leslie & Short 1999, 24). In addition, the earlier Iron Age iron-working industry was greatly expanded by the Romans, who exploited the exceptionally rich sources of iron ore in the Wealden clays on an industrial scale. There are a number of iron-working sites (known as bloomeries), dating to the Romano-British period (AR 25 & 64), or finds that indicate the site of bloomeries (AR 34, 50 & 88), which are located on the slopes of the ridges extending into the Combe Haven Valley. This includes the Romano-British bloomery (AR 64) in Little Henniker Wood (AR 65), which lies on a platform on the edge of the hillside above Watermill Stream.

2.1.13 Furthermore, Cleere and Crossley (1985) highlight a number of possibly Iron Age bloomeries around Byne's Farm (on the hill to the north of that site) that may have been the origin of the later Roman Iron working industry in this area (Leslie & Short, 1999, 22). Roughly 1.5 km to the north of the study area is the scheduled remains of a major Romano-British iron-working site at Beauport Park, which was associated with a military type bath house and possibly pre-Roman roundhouses (CBA 1994). Also to the north of the study area is the Romano-British iron-working site of Oaklands Park. Unfortunately these large sites have been largely destroyed now due to the frequent use of such material in the construction of turnpike roads in the 19th century. However, smaller bloomery sites are very numerous and it is likely that many still await discovery in the study area.

2.1.14 These iron-working sites indicate the importance of the iron-working industry in this area and may account for the apparent paucity of known settlement in the Weald. A number of sites have produced Roman roofing tiles stamped CLBR (Classis Britannica), the insignia of the Roman fleet. This suggests that some of these sites were occupied by the military and the wider area may have been officially controlled by an imperial estate designed to control the valuable ironworks, which between the 1st and 2nd centuries AD was the most important industry in Roman Sussex (Leslie & Short 1999, 25).

Early Medieval Period (AD 410 – 1066)

2.1.15 Not only is there a general paucity of archaeological remains throughout the period, there is also a lack of historical documentation from the early part of this period, though a small number of documents do survive as later medieval copies. This situation is mirrored in the study area, where no archaeological remains definitely dating to the early part of this period have been uncovered.

2.1.16 This region appears to have been occupied by 'the Haestingas' a group of Saxons that remained isolated from the rest of Sussex. They mainly settled the coastal margins, particularly the heads of the then several river valleys, which were great inlets of the sea south of the upland known as the Battle Ridge. Although there is no settlement evidence recorded in this locality, place names in this area testify to the presence of potential sites. Many of the placenames we have today are directly descended from those given to them by the Anglo-Saxons.

2.1.17 Areas with Anglo-Saxon placenames within the study include Worsham (referring to the group known as the Wyretelingas who owned it, the name is also documented in 722), Pebsham (named Pyppels ham after its founder); Lower and Upper Wilting farms (named after the Wiltingas tribe that may have occupied this area), Hollington (named after the Holingas, meaning 'dwellers of the hollow'), Sidley (meaning wide clearing) and Bexhill (meaning clearing with a covering of box). In addition, many places in the study area have the word element *ham*, meaning settlement or farmstead in Old English.

2.1.18 A number of Anglo-Saxon land charters make reference to habitation in the Weald, including at Bexhill, which was first mentioned in an Anglo Saxon charter of 772 when King Offa, King of Mercia, conquered the Saxon tribes of the area. The classification of land at Bexhill as 'inland' and 'outland', suggests complex settlement structure, with the inland being the most intensively farmed land of the lord and his tenants. The inclusion of information about roads, ditches, dykes and clearings on the 'outland' leave no doubt that in the 8th century this part of the study area was already permanently farmed and settled (Brandon 1974, 78-79). Such settlements may have comprised a system of open fields, surrounding a closely built village.

2.1.19 By the end of the 8th century places such as Hastings had developed into slightly larger settlement with craftsmen and traders instead of a village of farmers, while Bexhill had a Minster which tended the religious needs of a substantial area and would have led to an increase in the population and activity within Bexhill. Bexhill was also the head of the Bexhill Hundred (a system of land division with unclear origins or early functions that was later refined and used by the Normans) and the location of the hundred court. The meeting places of the hundred courts provided opportunities for trade, further increasing the activity, wealth and eventually settlement of these areas.

2.1.20 The latter part of this period is better understood, mainly due to the larger number of documentary sources available. In the 10th century a mint was recorded in Hastings, a

sign of the growing importance of Hastings and its urban economy. Alfred the Great had aided this growth by establishing a burh at Hastings in the early 10th century. These were created fortified towns, which were designed to defend the Kingdom of Wessex from Viking raids. The burhs were some of the first urban developments in the country since the end of the Roman period and their existence encouraged the growth of a more complex settlement pattern.

2.1.21 Sometime around the 9th and 10th century, the local parochial system began to replace the earlier Saxon Minster system. This involved the formalisation of an area of land, centred on the nucleated villages or hamlets that were formed in the early part of this period, into a parish that was served by a parish church. Four historic parishes cover the study area, these are Bexhill, Crowhurst, Hollington and St. Leonards and while they are relatively modern divisions they were relatively stable units divisions and give some clue to the early medieval land divisions of the area. As the Saxon lords provided the earliest parish churches, it is likely that the boundaries of their agricultural estates were used as the boundaries of the parishes (Friar 1991, 278) and the boundaries of these estates are likely to have been based on even earlier land divisions. It is this settlement pattern, which continued to develop throughout the later and post medieval period, that forms the basis of the settlement pattern still recognisable today (Brandon 1974). The parish boundary between Crowhurst and Hollington has since changed, with the old boundary recorded on the local Tithe maps dating it to pre-1850.

2.1.22 Only one piece of archaeological evidence dates to the later part of this period. This is a pre-Conquest, white sandstone coffin slab, which was found during restoration work in 1878 below the floor of Bexhill Church (AR 14), testifying to its antiquity. Although no settlement remains have been recovered, the presence of burial remains in the study area, documentation referring to Bexhill Minster and numerous placenames of Anglo-Saxon origin suggest that there was settlement which remains to be identified.

Later Medieval Period (AD 1066-1550)

2.1.23 During the later medieval period Sussex became one of the most important counties in England and the town of Hastings to the east of the study area was intricately linked with the events leading to and associated with the Conquest that defined the transition to the later medieval. Archaeological work conducted in 1996 (Wessex Archaeology 1996) in the vicinity of Upper Wilting Farm revealed no archaeological evidence to support the claims made by Mr Austin at the 1996 Inquiry that the area around Upper Wilting Farm was the site of the Norman Invasion. In addition, the hill-wash (colluvium) is '*likely to have rendered the Monkham Wood and Redgeland Wood inlets inaccessible to all but the smallest boats by the Roman period (1st – 5th centuries AD).*' (Wessex Archaeology 1996). As stated in the 1996 Wessex Archaeology report, '*There is a discrepancy between the probable height of tidal waters in 1066 and the areas investigated as the location of boat finds and jetties. In 1066, mean sea level is likely to have been c.0.75m lower than at present. As the*

areas investigated lie at between c.3.50 and 7.20m AOD, and present high tide varies from c.2.05 to 3.75m AOD, the putative jetties and boat remains would have been c.0.50 and 4.20m above high water at the time of the invasion. This distance is not commensurate with beaching practices and berthing facilities known from the Saxo-Norman period.'

2.1.24 This assessment has identified no further archaeological evidence to support Mr Austin's claims regarding the Norman Invasion site. Any future Environmental Statement would need to address this issue in considerable detail, perhaps through further physical archaeological investigation and historical analysis.

2.1.25 *post-1066*

2.1.26 With the start of the later medieval the main administration unit of late Saxon Sussex, 'the rape', was extensively reorganised and divided into 'hundreds' (with Bexhill continuing as the meeting place of the Bexhill hundred). Each rape formed an individual taxation and administration district and had a main town, which was close to the coast, with its own castle and port. The study area lay in the Hastings Rape, with its castle and port at Hastings. These urban areas offered an opportunity for goods to be bought and sold, allowing markets to develop (Leslie & Short 1999, 30).

2.1.27 In the 200 years after the Norman Conquest the population of the study area, like most of England, continued to expand and a number of secondary settlements were formed within each parish. These new settlements often lay in the downland and river valleys, with any upland waste and woodland remaining as common land and for hunting (Leslie & Short 1999, 34). In Bexhill this process of secondary settlement is testified to by the division of the parish into the tithings of east, middle and west Bexhill during the 13th century (VCH, 1937, XI: 115).

2.1.28 During the Norman period Hastings briefly became the principal port in south-east England. It acted as the main Cinque Port for 150 years and was one of the five original Cinque Ports along a short stretch of the Sussex and Kent coastline. The Cinque Ports were charged with providing the defence of this coast and the port of Hastings included Bulverhythe (meaning the harbour of the citizens of Hastings), which remained a limb of the medieval Cinque Port of Hastings until the end of the 15th century.

2.1.29 Bulverhythe (AR 47) is now a deserted medieval village (DMV) as by the end of the 17th century the greater part of the Old Town had been consumed by the sea (VCH, 1937, XI: 201). The site now lies beneath a housing estate but has produced sherds of medieval pottery during building work (AR 120). The Bull Inn (BH 71) and St. Mary's Chapel (AR 6 & BH 83) are all that remain above ground of the medieval village (now called Glyne Gap). The remains of the chapel, which had Norman foundations and was first mentioned in 1372, are a scheduled monument. Church Wood, which was the site of a later medieval vicarage until the construction of a Victorian house destroyed it (AR 26) is also believed to be the site of a deserted medieval village (AR 28).

2.1.30 It is likely that the settlements with Anglo-Saxon place names had continuous occupation into and throughout the later medieval, suggested by the survival of the placename (e.g. Worsham). The land in the vicinity of these settlements would have been farmed in a traditional, open field system, an example of which is suggested by the remains of a field system within the study area (AR 8). Nearby, at Upper Wilting Farm, a probable later medieval farmstead was identified during a recent archaeological investigation (AR 55).

2.1.31 In addition to the agricultural economy, the iron industry in the Weald continued to grow and by the 15th century the Weald was the main iron production area of England. This industry led to the removal of large blocks of woodland that had possibly survived since the post-glacial period to supply the industry with the fuel and timber it required. Bellpits in Monkham Wood indicate later medieval iron-working (AR 89). There are other examples of the later medieval iron-working industry within the study area, including the site of a possible medieval bloomery, located in an area known as Cinder Banks (AR 13). After the introduction of blast furnaces into the High Weald *c* 1496, many of the bloomeries began to move into the valleys (e.g. AR 33) as the bellows used in these devices were driven by water wheels supplied by the rivers running down the valleys. (Leslie & Short 1999, 63).

Post-Medieval Period (AD 1550-1900)

2.1.32 The historic interest of the post-medieval period is today most clearly reflected in the numerous brick and timber framed farm buildings of the Combe valleys and in the historic cores of Bexhill and St. Leonards (New Hastings). However, the period was a time of substantial change in the wider area. A search was undertaken of the available historic maps covering the study area. The successive maps document the history and development of the site and its environs, as well as changes in settlement and land use within the wider study area.

2.1.33 John Norden's map of 1595 is the earliest map that shows the site in its wider setting. Unfortunately, there is little detail of the study area, though it does depict an upland area between Hastings and Bexhill. What is now the historic core of Bexhill lies inland, with an area known as 'the pell' adjacent to the sea. The coastal landing site of Bulverhyth (Bulverhythe) between Bexhill and Hastings is also shown. Worsham is indicated just to the north of the upland area, on the western bank of the River. Sidley and Buckholt, areas north of Bexhill, Hollington east of Hastings and the area of Crowhurst to the north are also shown.

3 SURVEY AIMS

3.1.1 To identify any significant find assemblages within the area covered by the proposed development.

3.1.2 To determine the current spatial extent and character of significant find assemblages.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1.1 Eleven individual fields were suitable for fieldwalking within the study area. All the fields were arable with young crops. Ground visibility was generally good.

4.1.2 The fields were systematically walked by an experienced member of OA staff who was equipped with a Global Positioning System to accurately pinpoint find locations (accurate to *c* +/- 4 m). The 'tramlines' formed by tractors were used as transect guides. These were measured and found to be a consistent 24 m apart. Areas of soil discoloration, changes in soil type and significant stone scatters were noted. The locations of brick and tile, unworked burnt flint and mortar were recorded but these artefacts were not retained. Items of bone, slag, charcoal, glass and metalwork which could not be readily identified / dated and finds of clearly modern origin were discounted. Pottery, fired clay, worked flint or significant other finds were located and retained. Each recorded find was given an individual number and typological code.

5 RESULTS: GENERAL

5.1 Soils and ground conditions

5.1.1 Field walking was carried out on ground that had been ploughed and well weathered, and contained young crops. Visibility was recorded as a percentage of ground visible, typically 70-80%. The weather throughout the survey was ideal, being dry and bright with occasional cloud cover.

5.2 Distribution of archaeological remains

5.2.1 Two significant concentrations of archaeological remains were located during the survey. In addition, burnt flint was noted in all fields in various concentrations. Two concentrations of ceramic building material (CBM) were noted, both were modern in date (19th or 20th century), one was associated with a house, located just beyond the back garden, the other was adjacent to a farm track constructed from brick and CBM.

6 RESULTS: DETAIL

6.1.1 A total of 86 finds were logged, 66 of which were fire cracked flint which was not retained. Twenty flint artefacts were retained, consisting of: 13 flakes, two blades, one multiplatform flake core, two side scrapers, one re-touched flake and one burin.

6.1.2 The results of the survey are described by field, as numbered during the survey.

Field 1, (Fig 3)

6.1.3 Visibility in this field was quite poor, about 20% through a well-advanced young crop. The tramlines were aligned NW-SE and a consistent 24 m apart. The field sloped down down gently to the north into a valley, where a brook divided this field from field 2.

6.1.4 Three fire-cracked flints were logged in this field, all well separated. A blade struck from a bipolar blade core, and probably Mesolithic, was found at the base of the slope towards the north-east corner.

6.1.5 Ceramic building material was noted, on average every 2/3 m, but not logged or retained.

Field 2, (Fig 3)

6.1.6 Visibility in this field was very poor, about 30%, through an advanced young crop. The tramlines were aligned east west and a consistent 24 m apart. The field gently sloped down to the south and east.

6.1.7 A total of 14 pieces of fire-cracked flint was logged in this field located in two distinct areas. Three were located in a small cluster along the northern boundary of the field. The remainder were in the eastern corner, concentrated in an area roughly 125 m x 125 m.

6.1.8 Fragments of ceramic building material were noted, on average every 3 m, but not logged or retained.

Field 3, (Fig 3)

6.1.9 Visibility in this field was quite good, about 60% through a young crop. This was a small field gently sloping to the south and west.

6.1.10 Two fire-cracked flints were logged from this field. A concentration of ceramic building material was noted in the north-east corner, close to, and probably associated with a farmer's track.

6.1.11 Fragments of ceramic building material were noted, on average every 2/3 m, with a small concentration close to a farmer's track along the northern edge. These were noted but not logged or retained.

Field 4, (Fig 3)

6.1.12 Visibility within this field was good, at about 70%-80% through a young crop. The tramlines were aligned north south and a consistent 24 m apart. The field gently sloped down to the north.

6.1.13 A total of seven fire-cracked flints and one thin undated flake were logged in this field. The finds were well dispersed with no distinct concentrations.

6.1.14 Fragments of ceramic building material were noted, on average every 2/3 m, but not logged or retained.

Field 5 (Fig 4)

6.1.15 Visibility in this field was good at about 80% through a young crop. The tramlines were aligned north-south and a consistent 24 m apart. This field sloped down to the north, east and south, away from a ridge occupied by a farm and dwellings.

6.1.16 A total of ten, well-dispersed fire cracked flints were logged, and nine flint artefacts were retained from this field. All the retained artefacts were loosely concentrated to the south-east of the ridge, covering an area roughly 150 m x 100 m. This small assemblage ranged in date from Mesolithic/Early Neolithic to the Bronze Age. All but one of the artefacts consisted of flint flakes; two dated as Neolithic, one suggested to be Bronze Age, with the remaining five broadly dated as prehistoric. A single multiplatform flake core formed from a beach pebble was dated to the Mesolithic/Late Neolithic periods. No finds were noted from the lowest (slightly waterlogged) parts of this field to the north-east and south.

6.1.17 Fragments of ceramic building material were noted, on average every 4-m, but not logged or retained.

Field 6 (Fig 4)

6.1.18 Visibility within this field was good, at around 80%, through young crops. The tramlines were aligned north south and a consistent 24 m apart. This was a low-lying generally flat field with some waterlogged areas. A stream to the east divides this field from Field 8.

6.1.19 Only one fire-cracked flint was logged within this field, from the southern end, close to the stream.

Field 7 (Fig 4)

6.1.20 Visibility within this field was good at about 80% through young crops. The tramlines were aligned north south, and a consistent 24m apart. This field slopes relatively steeply to the south. It is divided from Field 5 to the east by a well-established hedge and track.

6.1.21 Just one fire-cracked flint was noted from this field at the base of the slope to the south.

6.1.22 Fragments of ceramic building material were noted, on average every 2/3 m, but not logged or retained.

Field 8 (Fig 4)

6.1.23 Visibility within this field was quite good at about 60%-70% through young crops. The tramlines were aligned north south and a consistent 24 m apart. The field sloped down relatively steeply to the west and was divided from Field 6 by a sinuous stream.

6.1.24 A total of seven fire cracked flints and two flint artefacts were logged from this field. All the finds were well dispersed with no particular concentration. The flint artefacts were both flakes, both broadly dated to the prehistoric period.

6.1.25 Fragments of ceramic building material were noted, on average every 5 m, with a small concentration just beyond the back garden of a house.

Field 9 (Fig 5)

6.1.26 Visibility within this field was good at about 70%, through young crops. The tramlines were aligned north south and a consistent 24 m apart. The field was adjacent to a railway and gently sloped down to the south.

6.1.27 Four fire-cracked flints were logged, and three flakes were retained from this field. The flakes were broadly dated as prehistoric, one showing a slight abrupt retouch. All the artefacts were well dispersed with no particular concentration.

6.1.28 Fragments of ceramic building material were noted, on average every 5/6 m, but not logged or retained.

Field 10 (Fig 5)

6.1.29 Visibility within this field was good at about 50%-60% through young crops. The tramlines were aligned north-west south-east and a consistent 24 m apart. The field gently sloped down to the south and southeast.

6.1.30 A total of six fire cracked flints and two flint artefacts was recovered from this field. The fire-cracked flint was well dispersed with no particular concentration. A Mesolithic/Early Neolithic side scraper formed from gravel flint was found close to the north-eastern edge of the field. A flake broadly dated as prehistoric was found in the southern part of the field

6.1.31 Fragments of ceramic building material were noted, on average every 4/5 m, but not logged or retained.

Field 11, (Fig 5)

6.1.32 Visibility within this field was good at about 70% through young crops. The tramlines were aligned north south and a consistent 24 m apart. This field sloped down relatively steeply to the south.

6.1.33 A total of ten fire cracked flints and two artefacts were noted from this field. The fire-cracked flint was well dispersed with no particular concentration. The artefacts consisted of a flake broadly dated to the prehistoric period and a blade of Mesolithic or early Neolithic date.

6.1.34 Fragments of ceramic building material were noted, on average every 4/5 m, but not logged or retained.

7 FLINT

By Hugo Lamdin-Whymark

Introduction

7.1.1 Twenty flints were recovered from fieldwalking on the route of the Bexhill to Hastings Link Road. The assemblage recovered includes flints which date from the Mesolithic, Neolithic and possibly Bronze Age, judged on the basis of broad technological traits. The assemblage is outlined in Table 1 and a catalogue is presented in Table 2.

Methodology

7.1.2 The artefacts were catalogued according to broad artefact/debitage type, general condition was noted and dating attempted where possible.

Table 1: The flint assemblage for the Bexhill to Hastings link road

CATEGORY TYPE	TOTAL
Flake	13
Blade	2
Multiplatform flake core	1
Side scraper	2
Retouched flake	1
Burin?	1
Grand Total	20

Table 2: Catalogue of the flint from the Bexhill to Hastings link road

Small find No.	Easting	Northing	Category type	Burnt No.	Broken No.	Comments
4	74800	9919	Blade			Beige flint orange iron staining. Heavy post-depositional edge-damage. Platform abrasion. From bipolar a blade core. Probably Mesolithic
21	75404	9851	Flake	1	1	Thin. flake
29	75696	10791	Multiplatform flake core			Beach cobble. Flake removed at end, but the form suggests a bipolar core. Mesolithic/early Neolithic?
31	75740	10728	Flake			thick
34	75758	10737	Side scraper			Thick flake. Crude abrupt retouch. Bronze Age?
35	75771	10775	Flake			Large hinged flake. thick
36	75769	10794	Flake			Platform abrasion. Possibly Neolithic. Post-depositional edge-damage
37	75768	10797	Misc retouch	1		Burin on retouched edge, or fortuitous flake from the end of an abruptly retouched tool. Gravel flint
39	75785	10652	Flake			Light cortication. Post-depositional edge-damage
41	75830	10676	Flake			Parallel side flake from regular single platform core. Neolithic? Gravel flint
42	75829	10635	Flake	1	1	
50	76233	11309	Flake			Post-depositional edge-damage. Large thick flake. Gravel/beach cobble
58	76088	11273	Flake	1	1	Gravel flint
60	77537	10675	Flake	1	1	
62	77559	10617	Retouched flake			Small flake with slight abrupt retouch
65	77578	10637	Flake		1	Platform abrasion. Post-depositional edge-damage. Beige flint. Orange iron staining
70	77245	10480	Side scraper	1		Gravel flint. Semi abrupt retouch. Mesolithic/Neolithic
74	76893	10423	Flake			Gravel flint
83	76938	10620	Flake			Heavy cortication. Heavy post-depositional edge-damage. Derived flint
84	76939	10593	Blade			Crested style removal. Blue white cortication. Heavy post-depositional edge-damage Mesolithic/Early Neolithic

The assemblage

7.1.3 The flint shows extensive post-depositional edge damage typical of plough-soil assemblages. The surface condition of the flint is variable, with most flints exhibiting no surface cortication, but a few do have a light bluish white cortication and two flints exhibit bright orange iron-stained surfaces. Six of the flints are also burnt and five broken. The raw material all appears to have been collected from a derived source, as judged by the varied colour of the flint and abrasion to the cortex. The core and a flake show wear and incipient cones on the cortical surface typical of beach cobbles.

7.1.4 The assemblage is small, consisting of only 20 flints, but technological attributes suggest flintwork of Mesolithic and Neolithic date is present with the possibility of a small number of Bronze Age flints. The Mesolithic component includes two fine narrow blades, a possible burin stuck from the end of a retouched flake, and a core. The core was used for the removal of flakes before being abandoned, but has platforms suggesting that it was a bipolar core. One of the blades also exhibits dorsal scars indicating it was struck from a similar bipolar core. Due to the limited size of the assemblage it is only possible to suggest a broad Mesolithic date, but considering the limited size of the blades (*c* 40 mm) a later Mesolithic date is most probable.

7.1.5 Neolithic flint is suggested by a small number of thin flakes exhibiting platform-edge abrasion, but not apparently resulting from a blade-based industry. Two side scrapers are likely to belong to either Mesolithic or Neolithic traditions. The suggestion of Bronze Age flintwork is speculative and based on the presence of a couple of thick flakes stuck with little preparation.

Conclusions

7.1.6 Bexhill to Hastings Link Road represents a small dispersed scatter of flints, but reveals evidence of earlier, and possibly also later, prehistoric activity in the area. Due to the limited size of the assemblage it is, however, not possible to be more specific with regard to dating or the character of activity undertaken.

8 CONCLUSION

8.1 Reliability

8.1.1 The soil was well weathered and artefact visibility was good in most cases.

8.2 Interpretation

Fire cracked flint

8.2.1 All the fields produced a number of fire-cracked flints, 66 in total. The majority of flints were situated on the higher ground of valley sides. This is expected for two reasons, the higher ground is more likely to have been utilised, and a significant deposit of colluvium has accumulated at the valley bases, masking and protecting potential archaeological features and deposits. The lack of artefacts in general from valley base areas suggests that there has not been significant re-deposition via erosion or agricultural practises.

8.2.2 A significant concentration was identified at the eastern corner of Field 2, Haverlock Farm, consisting of ten fire cracked flints within a relatively small area measuring 125 m x 125 m. Little can be said about fire cracked flints except that they most probably represent prehistoric occupation and industry, probably at various times, and over a broad area. These artefacts would have undergone some re-deposition through

a combination of factors, mostly soil erosion and agricultural practises, but are unlikely to have moved a significant distance.

Worked flint

8.2.3 A total of twenty worked flints were retained from the survey, mostly isolated flakes (13) broadly dated as prehistoric.

8.2.4 A single concentration of flints was identified south of Hillcroft Farm (Field 5). This assemblage of nine flints ranged in date from Mesolithic/Early Neolithic to the Bronze Age. Most were flakes; two were dated as Neolithic, one suggested to be Bronze Age, with the remaining five broadly dated as prehistoric. In addition there was also a single multiplatform flake core formed from a beach pebble, and possibly dated to the Mesolithic/early Neolithic periods. Hillcroft Farm is located on a flat ridge on the east side of a valley, an ideal topographic location for settlement (either seasonal or temporary), with fairly level ground, good visibility of the surrounding landscape and access to resources. This small assemblage, along with a number of fire cracked flints that were logged, suggest possible occupation of this ridge, perhaps throughout the prehistoric period.

8.2.5 Three flint flakes broadly dated to the pre-historic period were identified from Field 9. These were well dispersed but indicate some pre-historic activity within the vicinity.

8.2.6 A single blade flake was found within Field 1 and further struck flints were recovered from Fields 8, 10 and 11. Taken together with the finds of burnt flint they do indicate prehistoric activity in the general area although there is no positive evidence for a settlement focus.

Summary

8.2.7 The Combe Haven River resources and marshland would have attracted Mesolithic communities. The higher ground would have been ideal locations for temporary camps. Although Mesolithic artefacts recovered from the survey amount to a blade and a scraper, other finds from the area include a tranchet axe found close to Bexhill (AR 22), and a number of flint artefacts characteristic of the period. The evidence suggests that the Combe Haven River resources and marshland attracted transient Mesolithic communities.

8.2.8 It has been assumed that Neolithic settlements are focused on the lighter soils of the chalk downs. Two Neolithic artefacts were recovered from the survey, a flake and a parallel side flake assigned to this period. These and the previously found artefacts, such as several flint axeheads (AR 5, 7 & 44), two arrowheads (AR 7 & 20) and a range of Neolithic scrapers, flint wasters and fire-cracked flints (AR 15 & 51) indicate significant activity within the study area.

8.2.9 Evidence of Bronze Age activity (including palaeo-environmental evidence) is concentrated in the vicinity of Upper Wilting Farm (AR 51 & 57). The survey

recovered just one crude flake. This adds little to the body of finds in the study area dating to this period; which include a looped and winged axe found at Galley Hill, Bexhill (AR 10) and a small Bronze Age hoard, found in 1869 (AR 9). A Bronze Age flint axe was discovered near Hastings (Leslie & Short 1999, 18).

8.2.10 In the Weald, Iron Age settlement sites usually related to iron extraction and smelting. Combe Haven's catchment area contains several iron working sites, including Pepperingeye, Byne's Farm, Forewood and Crowhurst Park. The collection survey did not identify any artefacts of Iron Age date. However, some of the flint flakes broadly dated as prehistoric could possibly be attributed to this period. It could be considered that the survey gives negative evidence for Iron Age industry, on the assumption that iron working would have left identifiable remains on the surface, in the form of slag, or soil patches darkened by charcoal.

8.2.11 Given the occurrence of finds of prehistoric material, albeit at very low density, it is worth noting the general absence of other evidence which may indicate a low potential for sites relating to later periods to be present in the areas surveyed.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 LITHIC ASSESSMENT/ SPOT DATING

Find No	Material	Easting	Northing	Retained	Date	Notes
1	Burnt Flint	74734.00	9781.00			
2	Burnt Flint	74707.00	9842.00			
3	Burnt Flint	74704.00	9943.00			
4	Flint Blade	74800.00	9919.00	Yes	Mesolithic	Bipolar blade.
5	Burnt Flint	74865.00	10135.00			
6	Burnt Flint	74983.00	10133.00			
7	Burnt Flint	74983.00	10133.00			
8	Burnt Flint	75027.00	10161.00			
9	Burnt Flint	74991.00	10183.00			
10	Burnt Flint	74986.00	10182.00			
11	Burnt Flint	74964.00	10207.00			
12	Burnt Flint	73022.00	10231.00			
13	Burnt Flint	75003.00	10236.00			
14	Burnt Flint	74954.00	10215.00			
15	Burnt Flint	74954.00	10217.00			
16	Burnt Flint	74671.00	10162.00			
17	Burnt Flint	74668.00	10161.00			
18	Burnt Flint	74661.00	10162.00			
19	Burnt Flint	74466.00	10114.00			
20	Burnt Flint	74466.00	10114.00			
21	Flint Flake	75404.00	9851.00	Yes		Thin flake
22	Burnt Flint	75461.00	10000.00			
23	Burnt Flint	75457.00	9985.00			
24	Burnt Flint	75450.00	9954.00			
25	Burnt Flint	75424.00	9926.00			
26	Burnt Flint	75363.00	10024.00			
27	Burnt Flint	75332.00	9981.00			
28	Burnt Flint	75313.00	10030.00			
29	Core?	75696.00	10791.00	Yes	Mesolithic/early Neolithic?	Multiplatform flake core
30	Burnt Flint	75693.00	10769.00			
31	Flint Flake	75740.00	10728.00	Yes		Flake
32	Burnt Flint	75740.00	10728.00			
33	Burnt Flint	75767.00	10736.00			
34	Side Scraper	75758.00	10737.00	Yes	Bronze Age?	Side scraper
35	Flint Flake	75771.00	10775.00	Yes		Flake
36	Flint Flake	75769.00	10794.00	Yes	Neolithic?	Flake
37	Flint Flake	75768.00	10797.00	Yes		Retouch
38	Burnt Flint	75800.00	10868.00			
39	Flint Flake	75785.00	10652.00	Yes		Flake
40	Burnt Flint	75784.00	10653.00			
41	Flint Flake	75830.00	10676.00	Yes	Neolithic?	Flake
42	Burnt Flint	75829.00	10635.00	Yes		Flake
43	Burnt Flint	75749.00	11110.00			
44	Burnt Flint	75802.00	10982.00			
45	Burnt Flint	75813.00	11002.00			
46	Burnt Flint	75807.00	11058.00			
47	Burnt Flint	75796.00	11090.00			

48	Burnt Flint	76076.00	11053.00			
49	Burnt Flint	75562.00	10700.00			
50	Flint Flake	76233.00	11309.00	Yes		Flake
51	Burnt Flint	76260.00	11172.00			
52	Burnt Flint	76208.00	11270.00			
53	Burnt Flint	76160.00	11229.00			
54	Burnt Flint	76160.00	11229.00			
55	Burnt Flint	76107.00	11303.00			
56	Burnt Flint	76122.00	11243.00			
57	Burnt Flint	76156.00	11154.00			
58	Flint Flake	76088.00	11273.00	Yes		Flake
59	Burnt Flint	76073.00	11307.00			
60	Burnt Flint	77537.00	10675.00	Yes		Flake
61	Burnt Flint	77530.00	10711.00			
62	Flint Flake	77559.00	10617.00	Yes		Retouched flake
63	Burnt Flint	77549.00	10557.00			
64	Burnt Flint	77550.00	10545.00			
65	Flint Flake	77578.00	10637.00	Yes		Flake
66	Burnt Flint	77593.00	10683.00			
67	Burnt Flint	77386.00	10392.00			
68	Burnt Flint	77371.00	10365.00			
69	Burnt Flint	77318.00	10412.00			
70	Side Scraper	77245.00	10480.00	Yes	Mesolithic/Neolithic	Side scraper
71	Burnt Flint	77125.00	10536.00			
72	Burnt Flint	77105.00	10484.00			
73	Burnt Flint	77207.00	10390.00			
74	Flint Flake	76893.00	10423.00	Yes		Flake
75	Burnt Flint	77104.00	10696.00			
76	Burnt Flint	77081.00	10564.00			
77	Burnt Flint	77068.00	10560.00			
78	Burnt Flint	77034.00	10585.00			
79	Burnt Flint	77013.00	10533.00			
80	Burnt Flint	77016.00	10618.00			
81	Burnt Flint	76998.00	10512.00			
82	Burnt Flint	76970.00	10575.00			
83	Flint Flake	76938.00	10620.00	Yes		Flake
84	Flint Blade	76939.00	10593.00	Yes	Mesolithic/Neolithic	Blade
85	Burnt Flint	76921.00	10529.00			
86	Burnt Flint	76924.00	10527.00			

APPENDIX 2 REFERENCES

Chris Blandford Associates (2004) *Hastings to Bexhill Link Road: Archaeological Desk Based Assessment.*

CBA (Sept 1994) *A259 Bexhill and Hastings Western bypass: Environmental Statement*.

Cleere and Crossley (1985) *The Iron Industry of the Weald*
.
Friar (1991) *The Batsford Companion to Local Histo*ry.

Leslie & Short eds. (1999) *An Historical Atlas of Sussex*.

Victoria County History (1911) *The Victoria County History of Sussex*.

Wessex Archaeology (1996) *A259 Bexhill & Hastings Western & A259 Hastings Eastern Bypass:evaluation report*, WA 39211c

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Hastings to Bexhill Link Road
Site code: BEXHM:2006.109
Grid reference: TQ 7330 0750 - TQ 7950 1175
Date and duration of project: March 12th-16th 2007.
Area of site: 84 ha
Summary of results: 66 burnt flints (not retained) 20 prehistoric flint artefacts, One possible concentration
Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Bexhill Museum in due course.

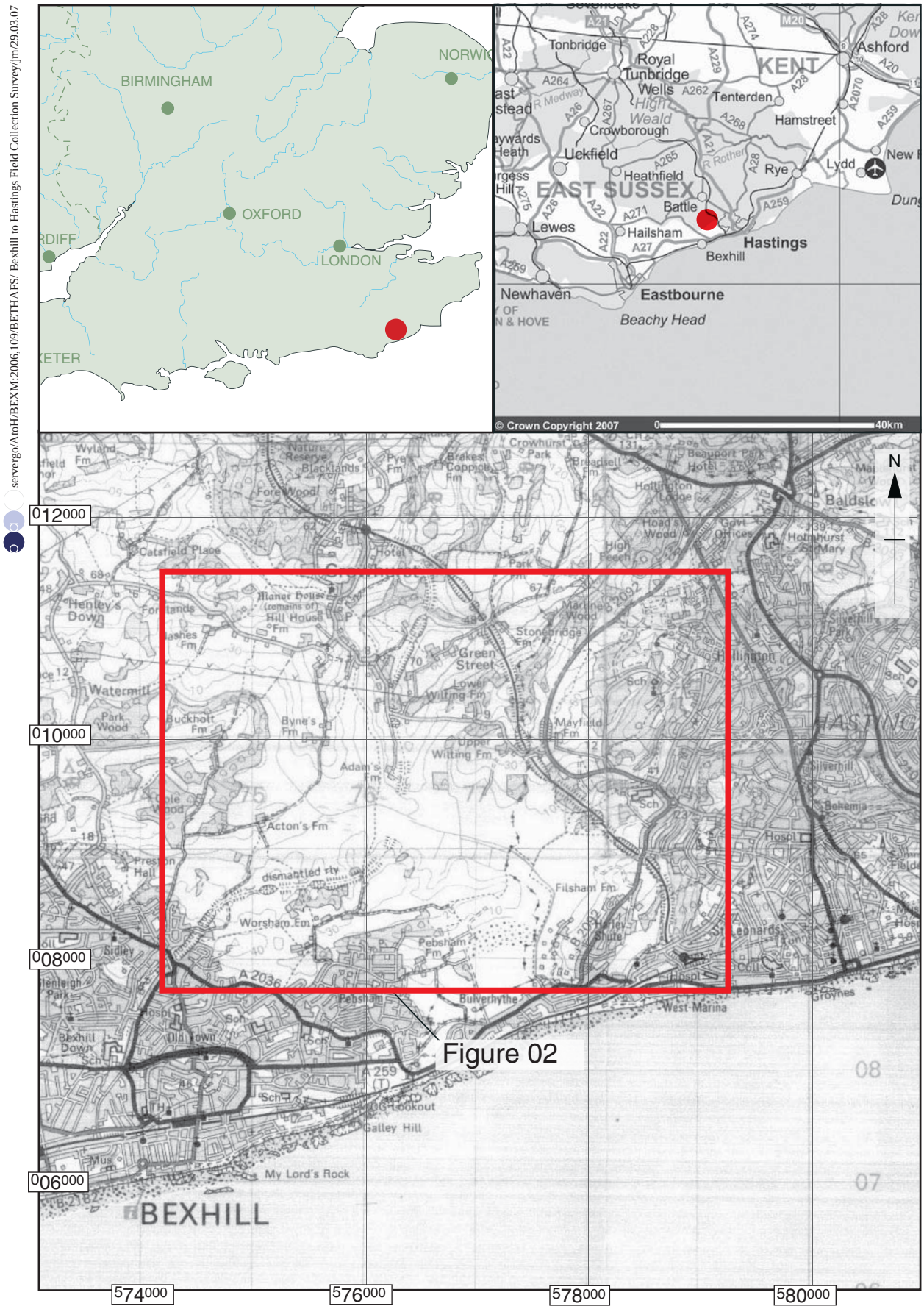

Figure 1: Site location

X:\Bexhill to Hastings Link\Geomatics\GIS\ArcGIS\current\projects\Fieldwalking\fig2_260307.mxd*BETHAFS*Bexhill to Hastings*GJ*24/04/07

575000 576000 577000 578000

111000

110000

N

Field 1
Field 2
Field 3
Field 4
Field 5
Field 6
Field 7
Field 8
Field 9
Field 10
Field 11

0 1 Km

1:10000 @A3

Key

Proposed center line

Fields walked

Survey data supplied by: OA

Figure 2: Location of fields walked

X:\Bexhill to Hastings Link\Geomatics\GIS\ArcGIS\current\projects\Fieldwalking\fig3_260307.mxd"BETHAFS"Bexhill to Hastings"GJ"24/04/07

575000

110000

N

Field 1

Field 2

Field 3

Field 4

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
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28

Key

- Burnt Flint
- Blade - Mesolithic
- Flint Flake - Prehistoric
- Fields walked

0 300 M

1:3000 @A3

Survey data supplied by: OA

Figure 3: Results of fields 1-4

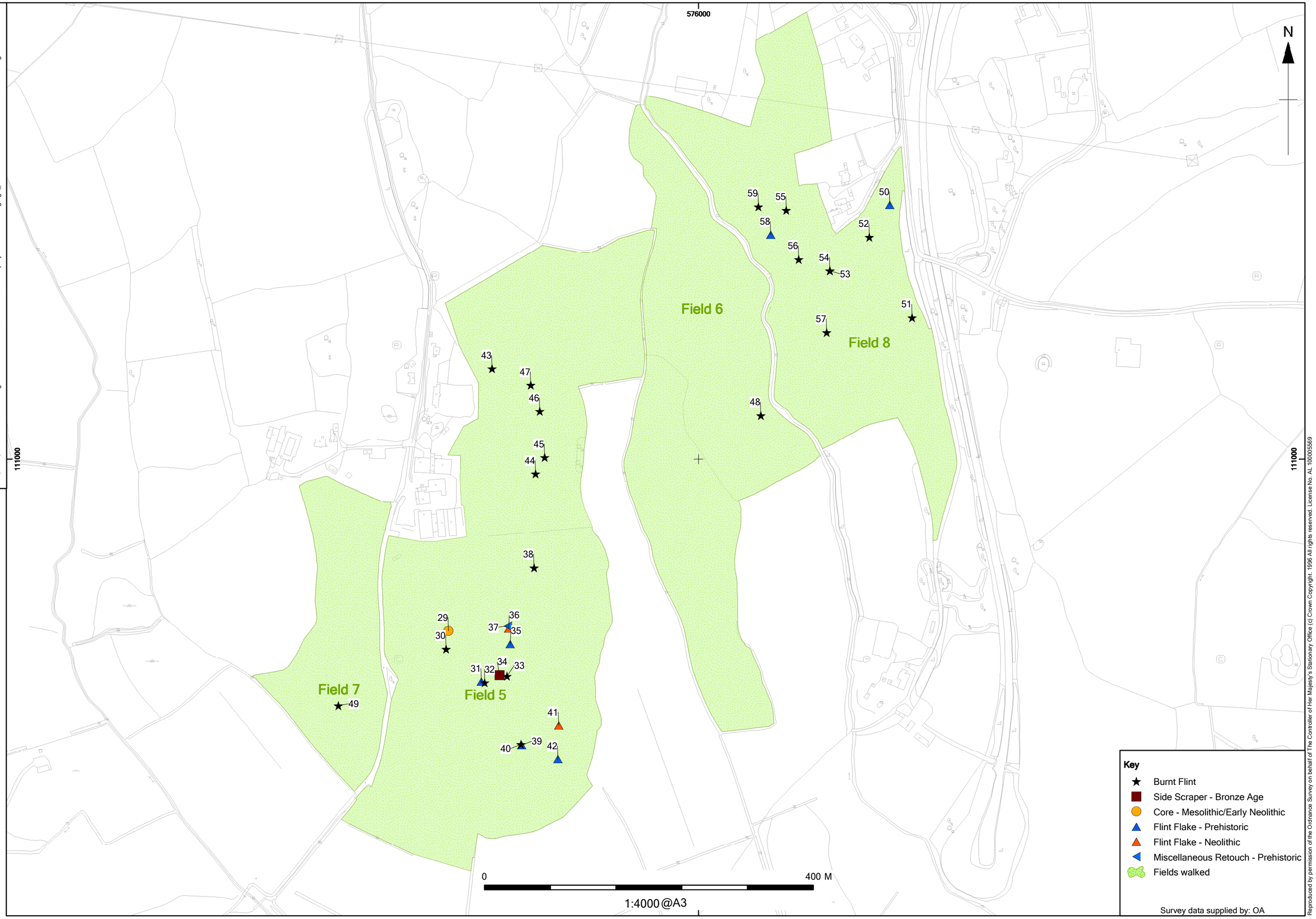

Figure 4: Results of fields 5-8

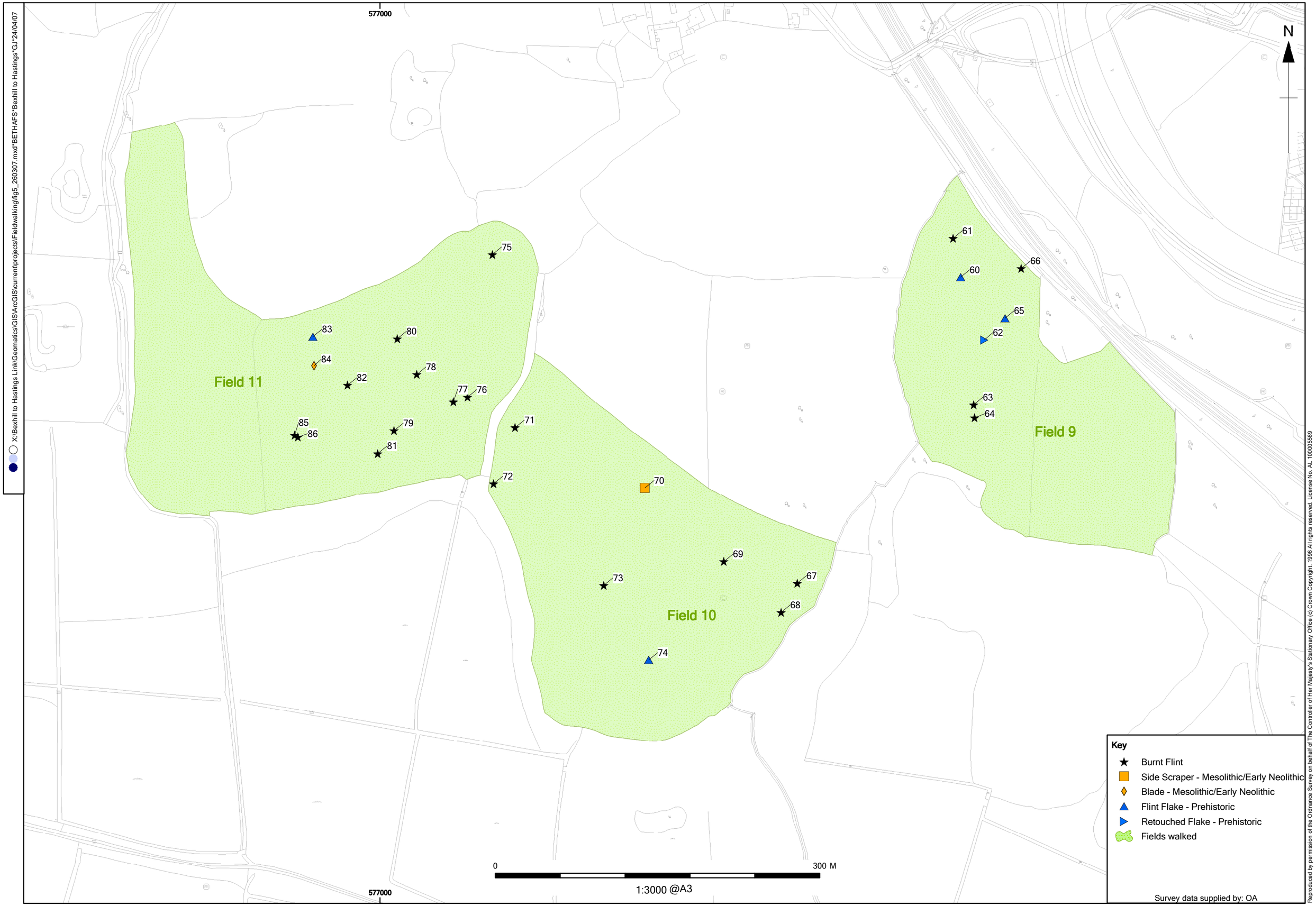

Figure 5: Results of fields 9-11

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