FIELDWALKING AT LOWER COLLIERS HILL FARM, BAYTON, WORCESTERSHIRE

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Contents

Summary 3
1 Introduction 4
1.1 Aims 4
2 The site 4
2.1 Location, topography, and geology 4
2.2 Archaeological and historical context 4
3 Methods 7
4 Results 8
4.1 Pottery 8
4.2 Ceramic building material 9
4.3 Flint 9
4.4 Clay tobacco pipe 10
4.5 Metal 10
4.6 Slag 11
5 Conclusion 11
6 Acknowledgements 12
7 Bibliography 12

Summary

Fieldwalking was undertaken by the North Worcestershire Archaeology Group at Lower Colliers Hill Farm, Bayton, Worcestershire (NGR SO 69951 72815), in 2014. The work formed part of a fieldwork training programme organised by NWAG. The project sought to establish baseline archaeological data for the site on the basis of a sample of artefacts recovered from the surface of the ploughsoil. A total of 2630 objects were found, spanning the Neolithic to Post-Medieval periods; this included sizeable assemblages of post-medieval building material, interpreted as disposed 19th century demolition rubble from the nearby Highwood Cottage, and a dispersed scatter of Roman, Medieval, and Post-Medieval artefacts consistent with cumulative manuring processes and casual losses on cultivated arable. A small assemblage of later prehistoric worked flint was also recovered, consisting mainly of Neolithic and Bronze Age material.

1 Introduction

This report details the results of an archaeological fieldwalking survey undertaken by the North Worcestershire Archaeology Group (NWAG) at Lower Colliers Hill Farm, Bayton, Worcestershire (NGR SO 6995 7282). No previous investigations have been undertaken at the site. The works were supervised and directed by Terry Chandler, and formed part of a fieldwork training programme organised by NWAG.

1.1 Aims

The aims of this report are as follows:

a) to characterise the locational, topographic, geological, historical, and archaeological attributes of the site;
b) to describe the fieldwork methodology adopted during the fieldwalking survey;
c) to describe the artefactual material encountered during the fieldwalking survey;
d) to interpret the character of human activity at the site, and to assess the significance of the results within their local, regional, and national context as appropriate.

2 The site

2.1 Location, topography, and geology

The site is located immediately north of Lower Colliers Hill Farm in the parish of Bayton, Worcestershire, 725m southwest of the village of Bayton and 4km south of Cleobury Mortimer (Figure 1). It consists of a roughly triangular field measuring 80,000m² (Figure 2), with a sloping topography declining from a height of 174m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) in the east to 158m AOD in the northwest and 159m AOD in the southwest.

The bedrock geology consists of Halesowen Formation mudstone, siltstone, and sandstone, lain down as fluvial deposits approximately 308 to 310 million years ago in the Asturian substage of the Carboniferous period (British Geological Survey 2019). Coal seams are frequently encountered in the Bayton and Mamble area (Buchanan 1944, 550), with the last pit closing in the 1950s. The local soil is a poorly drained and acidic loamy clay, and is mainly used as sheep and cattle pasture.

2.2 Archaeological and historical context

Bayton is located in the Teme Valley in the Malvern Hills district of Worcestershire, a region historically characterised by dispersed settlements and undulating topography peppered with tracts of ancient woodland (Roberts and Wrathmell 2000, 56). Evidence for prehistoric and Roman activity in the parish is sparse, and consists of miscellaneous worked flints, including a late Neolithic or Bronze Age barbed and tanged arrowhead found c.750m northeast of the survey area at Church Hill (Pastscape MN 114333), and a single unlocalised Roman bronze coin (Portable Antiquities Scheme WMID2435). This is more likely to reflect a lack of archaeological research conducted in the parish than a genuine lack of early human activity.

Early medieval activity in the parish is indicated by historical sources. Bayton itself is recorded as a manor of Ralph de Tosny in the 1086 Domesday Book, having previously been maintained as

two separate estates by Edric and Leofwin during the reign of Edward the Confessor (1042-1066); another manor is also recorded in the east of the modern parish at Carton, which by 1086 had passed into the hands of Osbern from its pre-Conquest landlord, Richard Scrope. Both manors have Old English place names (Bayton: 'Beage's farm/village'; Carton: 'Cliff/rock farm') that may indicate earlier Anglo-Saxon antecedents for their corresponding settlements (Mawer and Stenton 1927). Neither Bayton nor Carton had a priest in 1086; the earliest fabric in the parish church of St Bartholomew's (WSM08264), located *c*.925m northwest of the survey area and intervisible with it, consists of the twelfth-century Romanesque south doorway and font, the latter a product of the 'Herefordshire School' (Brooks and Pevsner 2007, 125-126).

In *c*.1280 Bayton contributed 27 taxpayers to the Worcestershire lay subsidy, hinting at a settlement in the form of a small to mid-sized village (Amphlett 1893); the corresponding figure for Carton is just 8 taxpayers, a number consistent with its 1307 description as a hamlet (Maxwell-Lyte 1908, 24). The locations of these medieval settlements are likely to correspond with the modern village of Bayton (WSM26785) and Carton Farm (WSM08195; WSM62168), although traces of earthwork moats at the Glebe House (WSM06615), Shakenhurst (WSM26786), and Timberlake (WSM00760) evidence high-status medieval occupation at other locations in the parish. By the time of the 1332/3 lay subsidy the number of recorded taxpayers had fallen to 17 in Bayton and 6 in Carton (Amphlett 1899), perhaps reflecting the impact of the Great Famine of 1314-1317 on the local population. The arrival of the Black Death is heralded by the 21 July 1349 appointment of a new vicar for Bayton and Mamble, William de Emynghope, on the death of his predecessor, Thomas Aleyn (Parry 1912), although its immediate demographic impact is unclear; however, by the time of the 1524 lay subsidy 30 taxpayers are recorded for the parish as a whole (Faraday 2003).

Agriculture was the most significant form of economic activity undertaken in medieval Bayton. In 1086 3 demesne ploughs and 12 tenant ploughs were employed to farm land held by the manor of Bayton, while 2 demesne ploughs and 1½ tenant ploughs were in use on the manor of Carton; the precise nature of the crops grown is unclear, although wheat, rye, and oats are likely candidates. Evidence for the locations of medieval fields is sparse, although at least some of the fields under cultivation in the post-medieval period are likely to have had medieval antecedents. Traces of possible ridge and furrow, for example, have been observed in a presently-cultivated field southeast of Bayton village c.600m southwest of the survey area (SO 6940 7255; T. Chandler, pers. comm., 2013), and it is possible that the distinctive reverse-S shaped western boundary of the field immediately west of the survey area (SO697728) fossilises a strip course from a medieval open field, perhaps identifiable with an unlocated plot named 'The Field' in 1709/10 (Shropshire Archives M1553/1). The proximity of these features to the survey area may suggest that the latter also formed medieval cultivated land.

Most of the crops grown in the parish would have been processed locally at the lord's mill; a mill belonging to the manor of Bayton was valued in 1086 at 5*s*. 0*d.*, and its continued high medieval use is indicated by the occupational bynames 'Adam de Molendino' in c.1280, 'Ricardo Molendino'

in 1327, and 'Ricardo atte Mulne' in 1332/3 (Amphlett 1893; 1899; Eld 1895). Details of an early sixteenth century legal case concerning a plot of waste land belonging to the manor of Shakenhurst in Bayton emphasise the additional importance of pastoral activity and animal husbandry to late medieval agriculture in the parish: a bill of complaint issued by Thomas Meysey, lord of Shakenhurst, describes how armed men lead by Thomas Blount, lord of Sodington in Mamble and Timberlake in Bayton, had forcibly enclosed a plot of land customarily used by freeholders as *'commyn for theyr beastes and catall all seasons of the yere'*, and had subsequently imprisoned Meysey's protesting son in a dovecote (The National Archives, Kew (TNA) STAC 2/20/370).

Woodland industries were an important component of the local economy. A strip of woodland measuring 0.5 leagues by 3 furlongs was listed among the assets of Carton manor in 1086, and occupational bynames associated with the estate, including 'Rogero le Forester' (c.1280) and 'Roberto le Fletchare' (1332/3), indicate some of the specialist woodland crafts pursued in the parish during the middle ages (Amphlett 1893; 1899). Aside from its economic value as a source of wood and timber for building and craft manufacture, woodland would have had an important role for grazing pigs, and it is likely that the use of 'Custom Wood' in Rock parish by tenants of the manors of Bayton and Timberlake, a customary right asserted in 1585 (TNA E 134/27and28Eliz/Mich38), was principally directed to this purpose; the byname of 'Roberto Bacon', recorded in Bayton in *c*.1280 (Amphlett 1893), may reflect an associated trade in specialist pig butchery. The byname of 'Willielmo le Collier', recorded in Carton in *c*.1280 (Amphlett 1893), may relate to the local production of wood charcoal.

The post-medieval development of Bayton parish can be traced through a combination of archaeological and historical sources. Demographic expansion is evident from Bishop Compton's ecclesiastical census of 1696, which recorded a total of 150 conformists and 5 nonconformists in Bayton parish (Whiteman 1986); eighteenth-century growth is attested by the 389 individuals recorded in the parish at the 1801 census (Greenwood and Greenwood 1822), and by 1901 Bayton had a total of 431 inhabitants. Post-medieval population growth at once enabled and demanded an expansion of agricultural production, a phenomenon reflected in archaeological and historical sources. Several seventeenth- to nineteenth-century farmstead buildings extant in locations beyond the core zones of medieval settlement, such as Lower Colliers Hill Farm (440m east of survey area; WSM54519), Enclosure Farm (815m southeast of survey area; WSM62372), Teddon Farm (2km northeast of survey area; WSM62166), and Houghtonspole Farm (2.35km northwest of survey area; WSM62155), are likely to reflect a cumulative process of assarting areas of ancient woodland, as are in place names like 'Bach Hay' (recorded in 1666; TNA E 134/18Chas2/Mich5), and 'Newlands' (recorded in 1788; Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, Worcester (WAAS) 705:126/6422/4/iii). This process of piecemeal assarting, coupled with the gradual enclosure of medieval open fields, commons, and waste, is reflected in the fieldscape depicted on the earliest parish map of 1814 (WAAS 970.5:125/1181).

The 1814 Bayton parish map reveals the survey area to be coterminous with two adjacent cultivated fields. One of these fields is located in the northwest corner of the survey area, centred

on SO 698 729, and has a subrectangular plan, with both western and eastern boundaries following broadly parallel arcs; these may partially preserve the courses of earlier medieval cultivation strips. The second field is situated in the south and east of the survey area, centred on SO 700 728, and has a reverse L-shaped plan. This layout is preserved without alterations in the Ordnance Survey (OS) 1st edition 1:2500 County Series map of 1884 (Figure 3) and in subsequent editions of 1904 and 1927; as late as 1967 the OS 1:10,560 map depicts the two fields as separated by hedgerows, suggesting that their amalgamation occurred in the late twentieth century.

Although cartographic evidence indicates that the survey area was used as arable farmland throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods, other forms of post-medieval land use are recorded in its immediate vicinity. Industrial activity is illustrated on the 1884 OS map by the earthworks of mineshafts associated with Mill Colliery (WSM08175), a working situated approximately 600m southwest of the survey area that had fallen out of use by the time of the 1904 OS map. Isolated post-medieval farmsteads and cottages are also documented in the vicinity of the site, and include the nineteenth-century farmhouse of Lower Colliers Hill Farm (see above) and two small cottages situated 415m southwest of the survey area and illustrated on the 1884 OS map. These buildings are named as 'Highwood' on a sketch map drawn in October 1910 by the Rev. E.E. Lea (WAAS 899:310/10470/256); parish registers and census records list families of colliers and agricultural labourers resident in the buildings into the 1880s, but they had been abandoned by 1891 and demolished by 1927.

3 Methods

Fieldwalking was undertaken on 5 April 2014 by a group of NWAG members, coordinated by Terry Chandler. Weather conditions were bright and dry, and ground visibility was good.

An area of approximately 34,400m², equivalent to the western half of the field, was sampled by grid walking. This was implemented on the basis of a series of 20m x 20m grid squares lain out from a baseline running north to south from the western hedge boundary. Each grid square was examined by eye for ten minutes. All artefacts were retrieved by hand and retained in self-seal bags labelled by site code and grid square. In addition, a small number of additional artefacts were unsystematically retrieved by hand from headland ground on the north, northeast, and eastern edges of the site; these were retained in labelled self-seal bags.

Post-excavation washing, sorting, and preliminary cataloguing was undertaken by members of NWAG. Flint identification was undertaken by Robert Hedge (WAAS), with all other identification and analysis undertaken by Murray Andrews. With the exception of the ceramic building material and slag, all hand-retrieved finds were examined, and all artefacts were identified, quantified, dated, and recorded on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Pottery identification was undertaken with reference to the Worcestershire Ceramics online fabric reference series (www.worcestershireceramics.org).

4 Results

A total of 2630 artefacts, with a combined weight of 68.5kg, were collected during fieldwalking. No significant patterns in the spatial distribution of the artefactual material were identified. The artefactual material is described below.

4.1 Pottery

A total of 622 sherds, weighing a total of 3.6kg, were collected during fieldwalking, and are quantified by fabric type in Table 1. The sherds were moderately to heavily abraded, and few diagnostic forms were present. This pattern is consistent with redeposited material subjected to cumulative agricultural events, such as manured domestic waste introduced to a cultivated field.

Fabric code	Fabric name	Count	Weight (g)
12	Oxidised Severn Valley ware	18	74.33
12.2	Oxidised organically tempered Severn Valley ware	19	103.46
32	Mancetter-Hartshill mortarium	1	25.19
64.1	Worcester type sandy glazed ware	1	6.24
69	Oxidised glazed Malvernian ware	1	2.78
78	Post-medieval red ware	127	1697.64
81.4	Miscellaneous late stoneware	91	721.89
85	Modern china	336	757.19
91	Post-medieval buff ware	26	202.37
99	Miscellaneous medieval wares	2	8.96

Table 1: Quantification of pottery by fabric code, sherd count, and weight

Thirty-eight Roman vessel sherds, with a combined weight of 203g, were recovered from the site. This material predominantly consisted of oxidised Severn Valley ware body sherds, dating broadly to the mid-first to fourth centuries, although a single sherd of mid-second- to early fourth-century Mancetter-Hartshill mortarium was also identified.

Medieval pottery was sparse, with just three vessel sherds weighing a total of 15.2g being recovered from the site. This consisted of an abraded strap handle from a late eleventh- to fourteenth-century Worcester type sandy glazed ware jug, and two heavily abraded sherds of an undiagnostic and coarse oxidised sand-tempered medieval vessel. In addition to this material, a single body sherd from a late medieval or early post-medieval oxidised glazed Malvernian ware vessel was also recovered.

Post-medieval and modern pottery was extremely common, accounting for a total of 580 vessel sherds weighing a total of 3.4kg. This material consisted primarily of late sixteenth- to early nineteenth-century post-medieval red ware sherds, several of which exhibited distinctive early silvery-black glazes; this material included a number of handle and neck sherds deriving from late sixteenth- to seventeenth-century necked and flared cups. Seventeenth- to eighteenth-century post-medieval buff ware sherds were also identified, as were a substantial number of sherds deriving from late eighteenth- to twentieth-century stoneware and china vessels. This material included diagnostic base sherds from stoneware bottles and bowls and also handles and base sherds from china teapots, plates, and saucers.

4.2 Ceramic building material

A total of 1893 fragments of ceramic building material (CBM), weighing a total of 63.2kg, were recovered from the site. This material was not examined in detail, but appeared to consist nearly exclusively of post medieval and modern brick and roof tile, and may represent redeposited building rubble associated with the early twentieth-century demolition of the nearby site of Highwood Cottage. In addition, two fragments of modern land drain and a single piece of daub (weight 103g) were also observed.

4.3 Flint

A total of 13 worked flints, weighing a total of 92.6g, were collected during fieldwalking. They are described in Table 2 below, and are illustrated in Figure 4.

SF	Description	Date
1	Light brown flake; triangular section; straight profile; ventral proximal bulb of percussion, percussion ripples; dorsal approx. 40% cortex, arrises; affected by heat; L 26.6mm; W 16.3mm; weight 2.55g	LBA?
2	Light grey and patinated flake; rectangular section; curved profile; ventral percussion ripples; dorsal arrises; L 20.7mm, W 18.1mm, weight 3.31g.	MBA-LBA
3	Light grey and patinated blade; D-shaped section; curved profile; ventral trimmed proximal bulb of percussion, percussion ripples; dorsal approx. 20% cortex, arrises, proximal end retouched to form notch; L 44.5mm, W 20.7mm, weight 9.03g.	NEO
4	Translucent mid-grey/brown flake; triangular section; curved profile; ventral pronounced proximal bulb of percussion, percussion ripples, retouch on left and right laterals; dorsal approx. 70% cortex, arrises; L 39.9mm, W 22.4mm, weight 8.78g.	LNEO-EBA
5	Translucent mid-grey/brown end scraper; D-shaped section; straight profile; ventral pronounced proximal bulb of percussion with small striking platform, percussion ripples; dorsal arrises, retouched left lateral side, thick cutting edge on right lateral side; L 24.8mm, W 17.1mm, weight 2.25g.	LNEO-EBA
6	Light grey and patinated flake; D-shaped section; curved profile; ventral pronounced proximal bulb of percussion, percussion ripples; dorsal arrises; L 42.2mm, W 25.5mm, weight 9.08g.	MBA-LBA
7	Translucent mid-grey/brown knife; triangular section; curved profile; ventral pronounced proximal bulb of percussion, percussion ripples; dorsal arrises, retouch on right lateral side; L 27.5mm, W 13.1mm, weight 2.49g.	LNEO-EBA
8	Light grey and patinated flake; rectangular section; curved profile; ventral percussion ripples; dorsal arrises; L 30.5mm, W 16.4mm, weight 4.36g.	MBA-LBA
9	Dark blueish grey and patinated blade; D-shaped section; curved profile; ventral percussion ripples; dorsal arrises; L 37.3mm, W 15.3mm, weight 2.51g.	EBA
10	Light brown blade; D-shaped section; curved profile; ventral double ball of percussion, percussion ripples; dorsal arrises, hinge fracture at distal end; L 32.4mm, W 15.5mm, weight 32.5g.	BA

11	Dark brownish grey knife; D-shaped section; curved profile; ventral percussion ripples; dorsal approx. 95% cortex, retouched right lateral, hinge fracture at proximal end; L 29.9mm, W 16.5mm, weight 1.67g.	NEO
12	Light brown scraper; triangular section; straight profile; ventral percussion ripples; dorsal approx. 5% cortex, arrises; L 39.8mm, W 26.7mm, weight 13.07g.	LNEO-EBA
13	Translucent mid-grey/brown scraper; triangular section; straight profile; ventral percussion ripples; dorsal arrises, retouch on right lateral side; L 14.7mm, W 14.1mm, weight 1.00g.	LPREH

Table 2: Catalogue of flints

Two pieces date to the Neolithic (4000-2500 BC) period, and consist of a light grey blade (SF 3) and a dark brownish-grey knife (SF 11); the former is a high quality piece, likely sourced from river gravel, and has been retouched around its bulb of percussion to form a notch. Three late Neolithic or early Bronze Age (3000-1500 BC) pieces (SFs 4, 5, and 7) are made of similar translucent mid-grey/brown flint, perhaps deriving from a single nodule found in river gravel, and have been worked into an end scraper (SF 5), knife (SF 7), and flake (SF 4) respectively; another scraper, made of light brown flint (SF 12), is contemporary with these pieces. A dark blueish grey blade (SF 9), meanwhile, is of a characteristic early Bronze Age (2500-1500 BC) form. Three patinated light grey flakes (SFs 2, 6, 8) are of middle to late Bronze Age (1500-700 BC) date, and derive from similar but not identical raw material; another light brown flake (SF 1) is of late Bronze Age (1000-700 BC) date. The two remaining pieces, a light brown blade (SF 10) and a translucent mid-grey/brown scraper (SF 13), date more broadly to the Bronze Age (2500-700 BC) and late prehistoric (8000 BC – AD 43) periods respectively.

4.4 Clay tobacco pipe

A total of 27 fragments of clay tobacco pipe, weighing a total of 50.6g, were collected during fieldwalking. Three of these are stem-and-heel fragments, and are of Atkinson's (1975, 25-32) Broseley types 2b (1660-1680) and 6b-8a (1720-1800) and Oswald (1975, 40) type 21 (1700-1740) respectively. In addition, three small bowl fragments were also found, one of which probably derives from an Oswald (1975, 40) type 23 (1760-1800) spurred pipe, with the other two deriving from indeterminate late seventeenth- or eighteenth-century pipes. The remaining 21 pieces are all small stem fragments, and have been quantified and dated by bore diameter following Harrington's (1978) method in Table 3. None of the fragments are stamped.

Bore diameter (inches)	Date	Count
9/64	1590-1620	0
8/64	1620-1650	2
7/64	1650-1680	9
6/64	1680-1720	6
5/64	1720-1750	3
4/64	1750-1800	1

Table 3: Quantification of clay tobacco pipe stems by bore diameters

4.5 Metal

A total of 3 metal finds, weighing a total of 12.9g, were collected during fieldwalking, and are described in Table 4. These comprise two copper alloy one-piece buttons, a characteristic form of

eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century dress accessory (Bailey 2004, 40-46), and a contemporary copy of a copper alloy halfpenny of George II's Old Bust Issue, issued in 1740-1754. The latter is a typical example of the kind of petty coinage that found mass circulation during the Georgian era as a means of payment for wages and small-scale purchases (Smith and Mossman 2012, 265-266); numerous parallels are known from West Midland sites, and include metal-detected site finds from Lower Colliers Hill Farm, Bayton (Andrews 2014, 9-11) and a late eighteenth-century 'purse hoard' find from Mill Street, Stafford (Robinson 1972, 152).

SF	Description	Date
14	Contemporary copy of a copper alloy halfpenny of George II, 1740-1754; copy as Old Bust Issue; obverse: [GEORGIVS II REX], laureate and cuirassed bust left; reverse: [BRITAN NIA], Britannia seated left; die axis 180°; weight 8.72g; heavy wear; heavy corrosion.	1740-1754
15	Copper alloy (tombac) one-piece button, c.1700-1850; plain flat front; conical setting on reverse, shank missing; diameter 14.7mm; weight 1.39g.	*c.*1700-1850
16	Copper alloy one-piece button, c.1700-1850; plain flat front; domed setting on reverse, shank missing; diameter 17.7mm; weight 2.78g.	*c.*1700-1850

Table 4: Catalogue of metal finds

4.6 Slag

A total of 72 fragments of iron slag, weighing a total of 1.6kg, were recovered from the site. This material was not examined in detail.

5 Conclusion

The assemblage recovered during fieldwalking at Lower Colliers Hill Farm provides a locally significant contribution to the archaeology of northwest Worcestershire and the Teme Valley region, providing material evidence for long-term landscape use in the Bayton area from the prehistoric to modern periods. In particular, the fieldwalking project provides significant new evidence for early activity in the vicinity of the site in the form of small assemblages of prehistoric worked flint and Roman pottery, two periods otherwise poorly documented in the parish specifically and the Teme Valley region more broadly (see section 2.2). Furthermore, the medieval and later material offers a valuable contribution to site-specific land use histories, at once corroborating and extending understanding afforded by documentary and cartographic sources. The low density scatter of abraded medieval pottery found on the site, for example, is likely to reflect material introduced through agricultural processes, chiefly sporadic manuring of domestic waste from the village or surrounding hamlets or moated sites; its scarcity vis-à-vis post-medieval and modern pottery may therefore reflect an intensification of arable farming practices at the site from the seventeenth century onwards, a phenomenon otherwise suggested by historical evidence. However, it seems likely that additional depositional processes may have contributed to the presence of specific artefact classes at the site. For example, the abundant post-medieval CBM is likely to represent redeposited building rubble associated with the demolition of the nearby

Highwood Cottages, while the eighteenth- to nineteenth-century buttons and coin may reflect occasional instances of casual loss on a cultivated field.

At a more general level, the fieldwalking project has provided an important training opportunity for NWAG members, providing experience and practical skills which may be applied to future fieldwork programmes in the region.

6 Acknowledgements

NWAG would like to thank the landowners, Mr and Mrs Evans of Lower Colliers Hill Farm, for permission to undertake this fieldwalking survey in 2014. We also wish to thank Terry Chandler for organising the fieldwork on site, Rob Hedge (WAAS) for his help in identifying flints, and Murray Andrews, Margaret Burrows, Terry Chandler, Jane Field, Francesca Llewellyn, and Chris Venables for their contributions to this report.

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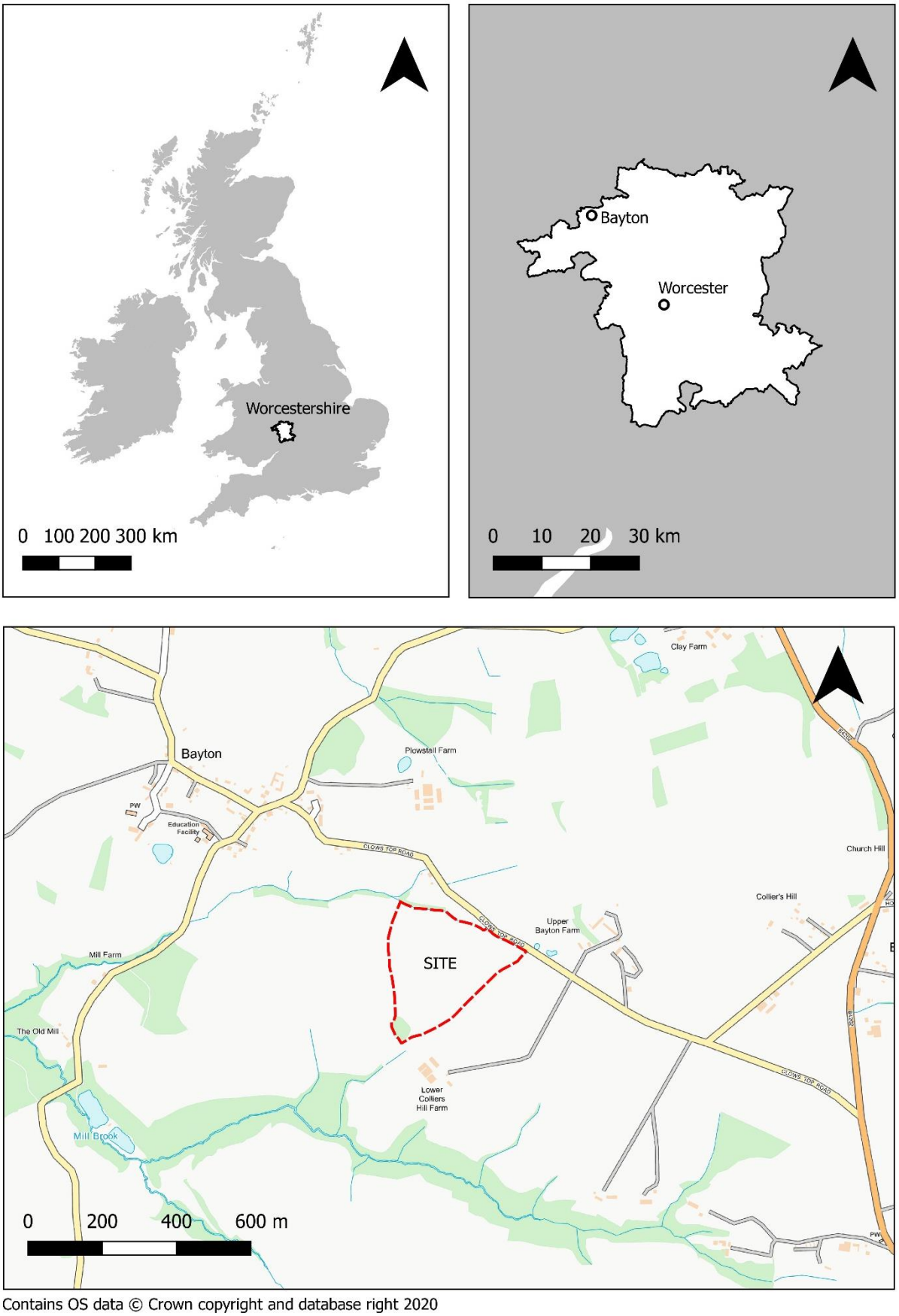

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Figure 1: Location map

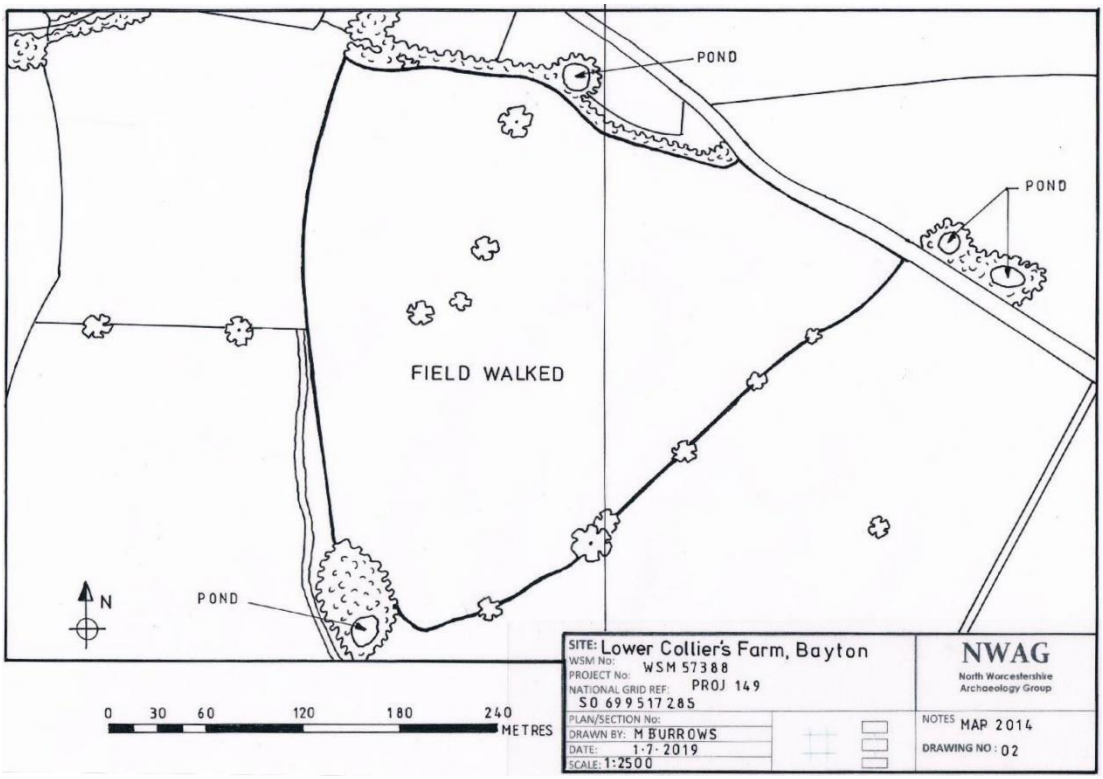

Figure 2: Plan of survey area, 1:2500 scale

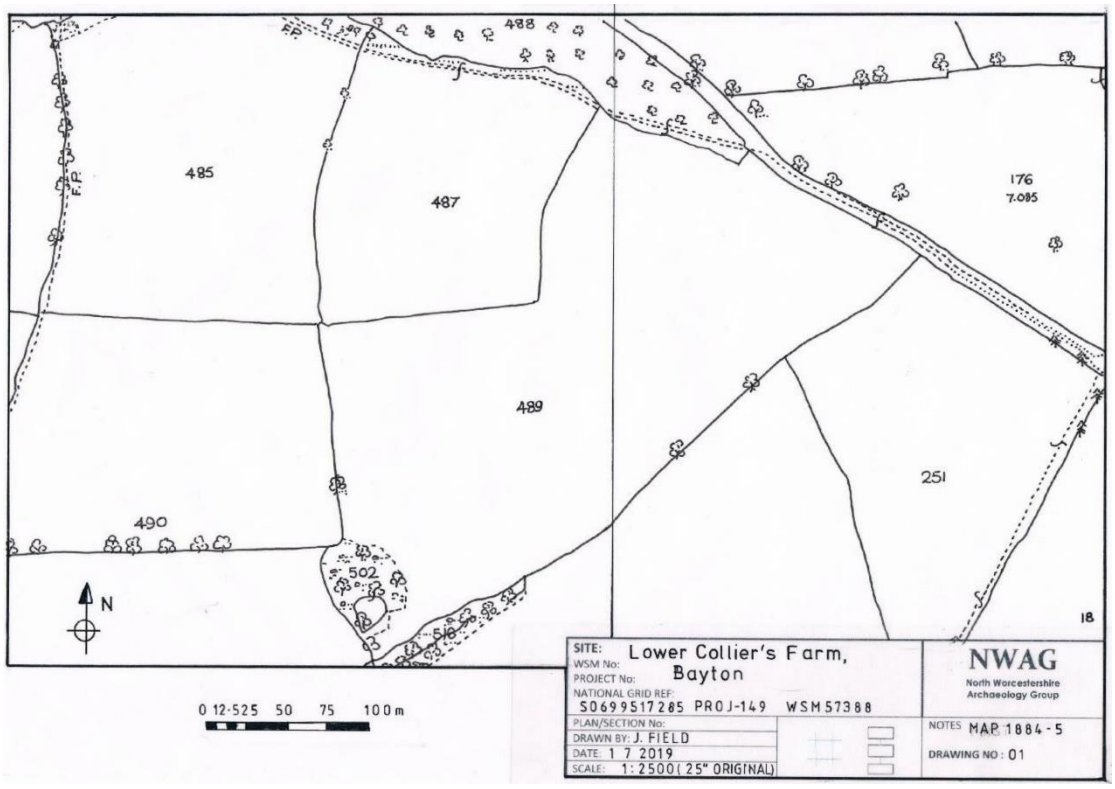

Figure 3: Plan of survey area on the 1884 OS 1st ed 1:2500 County Series map

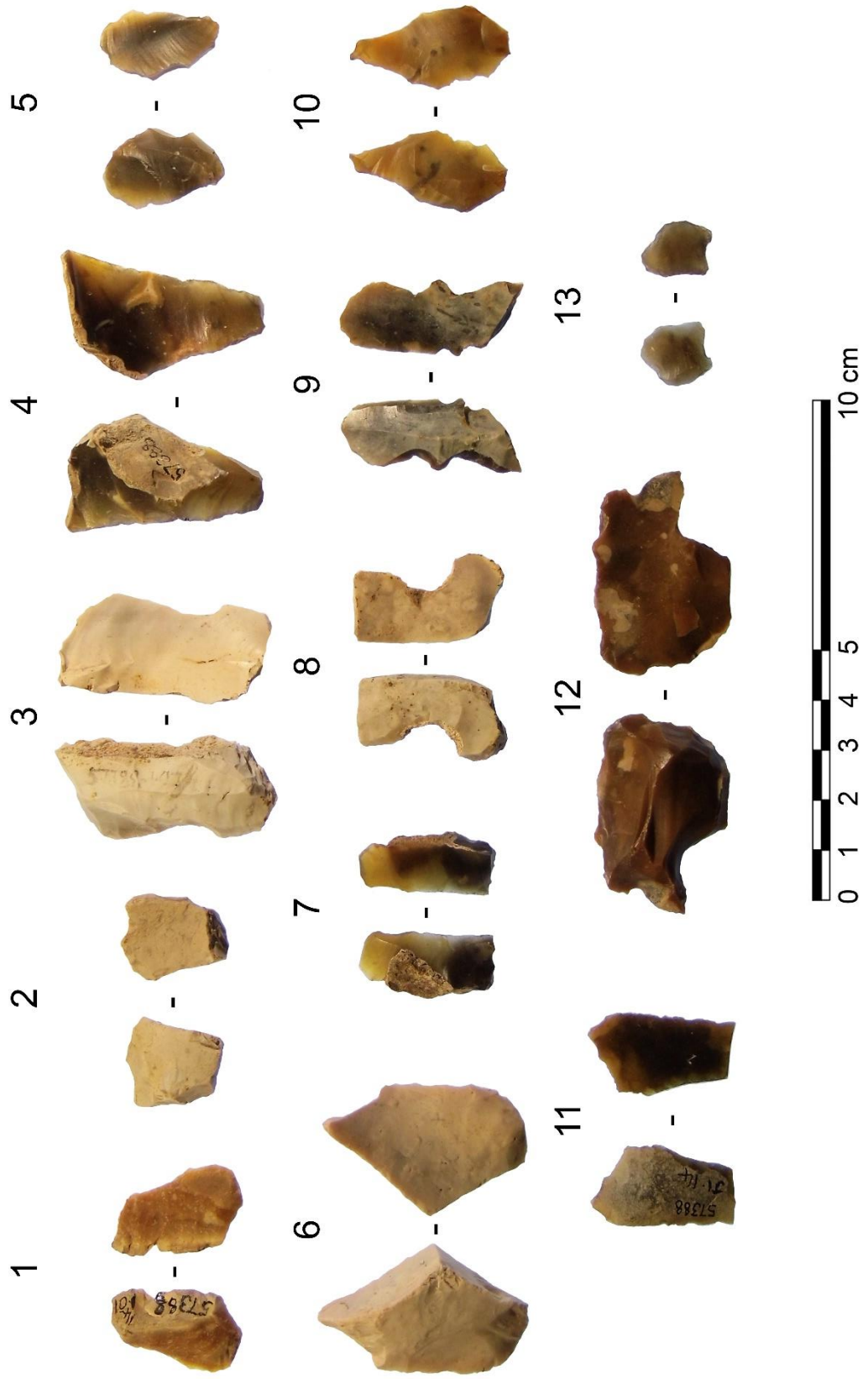

Figure 4: Prehistoric worked flints, ordered by SF number (see Table 2)