

satisfying to know that two eminent academics have now elucidated its true importance and underlines how many potential treasures are stored in the boxes held in the Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service.

Robin Whittaker

Fieldwalking at Lower Colliers Hill Farm, Bayton

On 5 April 2014 a fieldwalking survey was undertaken by the North Worcestershire Archaeology Group (NWAG) on land immediately north of Lower Colliers Hill Farm, Bayton (NGR SO 6995 7282; Figure 1).

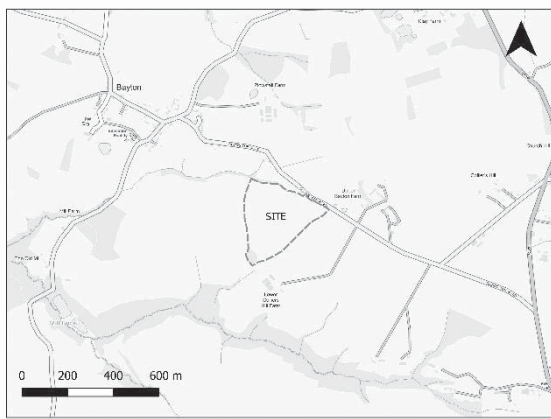
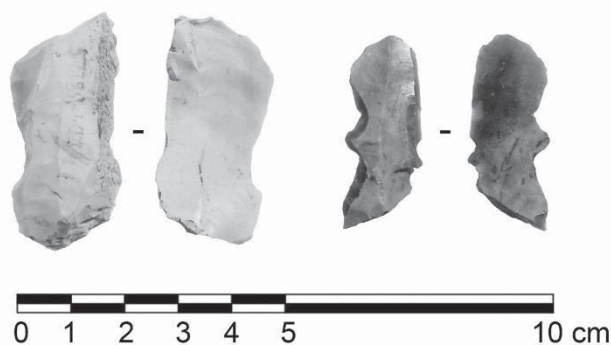


Figure 1: Location of survey

The survey formed part of a fieldwork training programme organised by NWAG, and sought to establish baseline archaeological data for the site on the basis of a sample of artefacts recovered from the surface of the ploughsoil. An area of approximately 3.44ha, equivalent to the western half of the field, was sampled using grid walking, implemented using a series of 20m x 20m grid squares laid out from a baseline running north to south from the western hedge boundary. Each grid square was examined by eye for ten minutes, and all artefacts were retrieved by hand and retained in self-seal bags labelled by site code and grid square. Weather conditions were bright and dry, and ground visibility was good. A total of 2630 artefacts, with a combined weight of 68.5kg, were collected during the survey, and were identified, recorded, and analysed by Dr Murray Andrews (University of Worcester) and Rob Hedge MCIFA (WAAS).

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Left: Figure 2. Prehistoric worked flints



While no significant patterns in the spatial distribution of finds were identified, the assemblage as a whole contributes significant new evidence for nearly 6000 years of land use in the Teme Valley district. Prehistoric activity, previously represented in the parish by a lone barbed and tanged arrowhead found at Church Hill, was evidenced by 13 worked flints dating

from the Neolithic to the Late Bronze Age (Figure 2). Particularly significant pieces include a high-quality light grey Neolithic blade with a notched bulb of percussion, and a dark blueish-grey blade of early Bronze Age date. Thirty-eight moderately to highly abraded Roman vessel sherds were also found: this material consisted overwhelmingly of oxidised Severn Valley ware, although a single sherd from a Mancetter-Hartshill mortarium was also identified. This pottery was highly abraded, and probably represents manured domestic waste from an off-site location introduced to a cultivated field. Like the flints, this material represents an important

contribution to the evidence base for early activity in Bayton: prior to fieldwalking, a single unlocalised bronze coin was the only Roman find known from the parish.

Historical, cartographic, and toponymic evidence indicates that the site served as cultivated land during the medieval and post-medieval periods, and this conclusion is generally supported by the artefactual evidence. Medieval finds were sparse and highly abraded, consisting of a strap handle from a Worcester-type sandy glazed ware jug, two sherds from undiagnostic coarse oxidised sand-tempered medieval vessels, and a single body sherd from an oxidised glazed Malvernian ware vessel. Post-medieval finds, however, were extremely common, and may represent an intensification of agricultural activity at this period: key material included 1893 pieces of ceramic building material (CBM), 580 sherds from post-medieval red ware, post-medieval buff ware, late stoneware and modern china vessels, 27 fragments of seventeenth- to eighteenth-century clay tobacco pipes, two eighteenth- to mid-nineteenth-century copper-alloy one piece buttons, and a single counterfeit halfpenny of George II's Old Bust Issue (1740-1754). As previously, the composition and condition of this material was generally suggestive of manured waste deposited on arable land, although the abundant CBM could also represent redeposited building rubble originating from the nearby Highwood Cottages, which had been abandoned by 1891 and demolished by 1927.

NWAG are grateful to the landowners, Mr and Mrs Evans, for granting permission to undertake this survey. The full report for this project will be made available via the NWAG website (www.northwag.org) and the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record.

Murray Andrews, Margaret Burrows, Terry Chandler, Jane Field, Francesca Llewellyn, and Chris Venables

News from the City

I am writing this at home. Our office is now closed due to the COVID-19 lockdown, and all Worcester City Council staff have been issued with home working kits which give us access to our files on the council network. Many staff already had these and were already working from home part time. Until my kit arrived I was using my home computer and emailing documents to my work account. This requires rigorous version control, and in one failure of this I managed to overwrite a part completed version of this report, so have had to start again!

Most archaeological fieldwork has been suspended during the lockdown, potentially giving some of us the chance to catch up on backlogs, though there is a strong likelihood that many will be redeployed to do other jobs over the coming weeks, depending on how the crisis unfolds. In the meantime this report covers some of the work which has happened in Worcester over the past six months.

Some investigation has now started in Worcester's car parks (see *Recorder*, Spring 2019), with a ground-penetrating radar survey of Copenhagen Street car park. This took place overnight on Sunday nights in January, when the car park was at its quietest. The survey has provided a lot of information which will be more clearly understood once some intrusive investigation by borehole and trenching has happened. We are currently tendering for that part of the project and had planned to have archaeologists in the field from May, but that will now be delayed by several months. King Street car park will be next, but the radar survey there is also now delayed.