

Specialist Report 7

Worked Stone

by Ruth Shaffrey

Roman

Three fragments of lava (76g) were found in the basal fill of an early Roman ditch (3203; Pipeline Diversion, COLP15). The lava fragments are not diagnostic, but they are almost certain to be from rotary querns because this is the only known use for lava in England. They are unlikely to be pre-conquest in date (Fitzpatrick 2017).

Post-Roman

A total of eleven fragments of worked stone representing eight objects were recovered from medieval features. Seven fragments from five Norwegian Ragstone whetstones were found in pit 1159 (Access Road, COARD12, three adjoining fragments), hollow 8101 (COARD12), and layers 3203 and 3205 (Salt Fleet Flats, CSCOX13; three examples). All are crudely finished but are well used, there being much faceting across the stones.

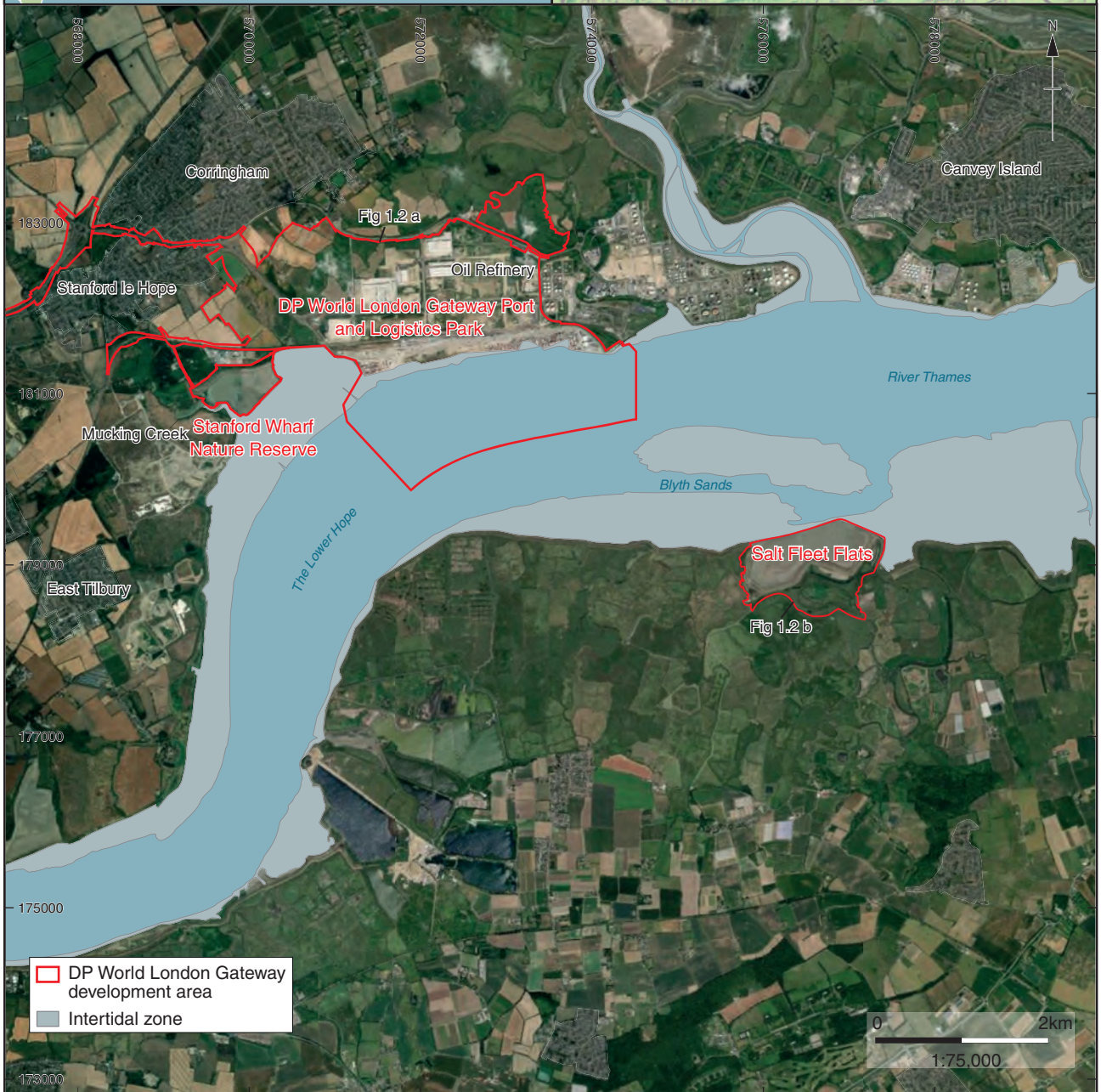
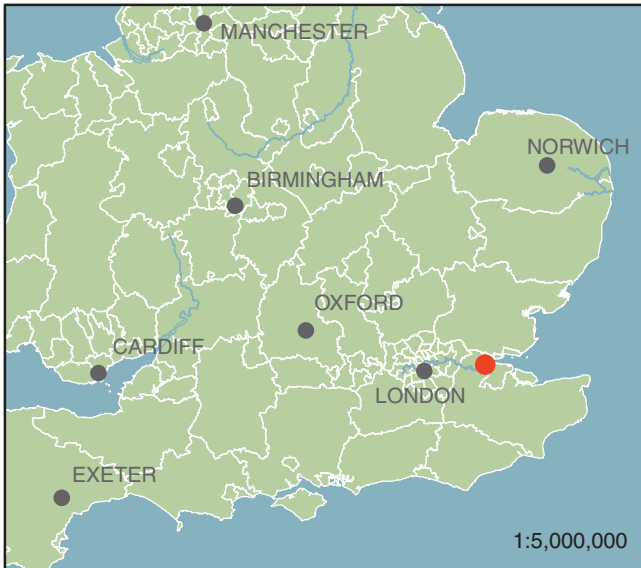
Two adjoining fragments of a lava rotary quern were found in pond 1005 (COARD12). It appears to be of flat disc form. A further possible quern or processing slab of quartzite was found in pit 3002 (CSCOX13); it has traces of pecking indicative of a grinding surface.

These whetstones and querns are indicative of general activity and have been made of materials typical for the region in this period. Norwegian Ragstone was the most commonly used whetstone material in medieval England; occurring widely in urban contexts, it must have been imported in great number. Indications are that it was imported as rough slabs and broken up into useable pieces but not always fashioned into neatly finished tools. Lava was imported from Germany for use as querns and millstones during the medieval and post-medieval periods and occurs across the country, although not in great number.

A limestone slab was found in pond 1005 (COARD12). The slab is of a strikingly white crystalline limestone, which was almost certainly imported from the continent and was presumably utilised as flooring.

Reference

Fitzpatrick, A, 2017 The famous volcanic rock of the Eifel. Was it imported to Britain in prehistory?, in *Written in stone: papers on the function, form, and provenancing of prehistoric stone objects in memory of Fiona Roe* (ed. R Shaffrey), Highfield Press, St Andrews, 195-214



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