

SIBFORD ROAD, HOOK NORTON (HOSIR17) - FLINT
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Introduction (Table 1)

Excavations at Hook Norton, Oxfordshire yielded a very small assemblage of 14 struck flints. The assemblage was entirely recovered from late Iron Age or Roman features and included one decent group from Roman pit 1129 that may indicate an area of truncated prehistoric activity. The assemblage was very tool heavy and included one barbed-and-tanged arrowhead of early Bronze Age date, however, the remaining examples were all undiagnostic.

Table 1: The flint assemblage from Hook Norton, Oxfordshire

Category type	
Flake	4
Blade	1
Bladelet	1
Blade index	33.33% (2/6)
Irregular waste	1
Sieved chip	2
Scraper side	2
Arrowhead barbed-and-tanged	1
Awl	1
Denticulate	1
Total	14

No. burnt (%)	0/14 (0%)
No. broken (%)	5/12 (41.67%)
No. retouched (%)	5/12 (41.67%)

The assemblage

The majority of the flints were recovered as isolated finds in Roman pits (5) or ditches (8) as well as a single flint from a Roman building layer. The only concentration of finds consisted of six flint from late Iron Age/early Roman pit 1129. The flints were actually in quite good condition indicating minimal disturbance (16.67% fresh and 83.33% light edge damage) and very probably originated from a layer or feature truncated during the excavation and backfilling of that feature.

The blanks present in the assemblage comprised two blade forms and eight flakes, four of which were modified into tools. No cores or related core dressing pieces were recovered. The limited presence of blade forms including one soft hammer-struck thin regular flake does indicate a very limited Mesolithic or earlier Neolithic component. The remaining flakes could belong to any prehistoric period but one or two are typical of later prehistoric expedient knapping strategies.

Five tools were recovered out of just 12 non-chips, giving an astronomical figure for tools of 41.67%. While it is likely that this is partially recovery bias, this was also reflected in the material recovered in bulk samples (66.67%) and may very probably be an indication of some form of tool-heavy setting such as a ceremonial or domestic focus. The tools comprised two side scrapers, a denticulate, an awl and a slightly broken but quite fine barbed-and-tanged arrowhead of Conygar sub-type. This latter piece was a thin, regular example with all over invasive flaking recovered from mid-Roman ditch fill 1155.

The assemblage represented a slightly disturbed small-scale assemblage from a range of periods. It included very limited activity from early prehistory, most likely related to

short stay task camps of mobile groups. The post Mesolithic element is less easy to interpret as it contained a very high number of tools for its size. The only datable tool was a barbed-and-tanged arrowhead, more typical of examples from burials or ceremonial settings rather than the more expedient types recovered as stray or surface finds. The remaining tools comprised scrapers and other forms often associated with butchery and hide processing and were more typical of domestic activity. Unfortunately, these cannot be closely dated but are very probably post-Mesolithic in date. Overall, the assemblage is of low importance but does highlight very intermittent activity here during at last two periods of prehistory.

Methodology

The artefacts were catalogued according to OA South's standard system of broad artefact/debitage type (Anderson-Whymark 2013; Bradley 1999), general condition noted and dating was attempted where possible. The assemblage was catalogued directly onto an Open Office spreadsheet. During the assessment additional information on condition (rolled, abraded, fresh and degree of cortication), and state of the artefact (burnt, broken, or visibly utilised) was also recorded. Retouched pieces were classified according to standard morphological descriptions (e.g. Bamford 1985, 72-77; Healy 1988, 48-9; Bradley 1999). Technological attribute analysis was initially undertaken and included the recording of butt and termination type (Inizan *et al.* 1999), flake type (Harding 1990), hammer mode (Onhuma and Bergman 1982), and the presence of platform edge abrasion.

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