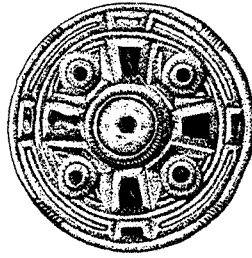


OFFICE COPY.



Archaeological Field Unit

Prehistoric Lithics from the Gog Magog Golf Course,  
Stapleford

Archaeological Field Unit

1997

**Cambridgeshire County Council**

Report No A108

*Commissioned By The Gog Magog Golf Club*

# Prehistoric Lithics from the Gog Magog Golf Course, Stapleford

Archaeological Field Unit

1997

With a Contribution by Tim Reynolds PhD

*Report No A108*

© Archaeological Field Unit  
Cambridgeshire County Council  
Fulbourn Community Centre  
Haggis Gap, Fulbourn  
Cambridgeshire CB1 5HD  
Tel (01223) 881614  
Fax (01223) 880946

### *Summary*

*In the spring of 1995 the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council carried out an archaeological recording brief, by means of fieldwalking and monitoring of earth-moving, in fields forming an extension to the Gog Magog Golf Course, Stapleford, Cambridgeshire (TL 500/538).*

*The site forms part of an area of significant prehistoric and Roman activity, lying within a few hundred metres of Neolithic flint scatters, Bronze Age barrows, the Iron Age hillfort of Wandlebury, and the Roman road known as Worsted Street. While a previous evaluation had found little evidence for activity on the sloping ground of the Golf Course site, fieldwalking for the recording brief produced a discrete cluster of Mesolithic flints, probably representing a production site.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY & LAND USE	1
3	ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	1
4	METHODOLOGY & RESULTS	5
5	DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS	5
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	6
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	6
	APPENDIX: Worked Flint Report <i>by Tim Reynolds</i>	9

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	Site Location Plan	2
Figure 2	Location of Fieldwalking Transects	4
Figure 3	Lithic Finds from Fieldwalking	8

# PREHISTORIC LITHICS FROM THE GOG MAGOG GOLF COURSE, STAPLEFORD (TL500/538)

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1995 the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council carried out an archaeological recording brief, by means of fieldwalking and monitoring of earth-moving, in fields to the north-east of Wandlebury hillfort in Stapleford parish, Cambridgeshire (Fig. 1). The site consists of some 18ha of arable land which was being landscaped to form an extension to the existing Gog Magog golf course. Fieldwalking took place on 19th-20th April 1995 with further monitoring on separate occasions in May and June 1995. The work was commissioned by the Gog Magog Golf Club and undertaken in accordance with a brief designed by the County Archaeology Office.

## 2 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY & LAND USE

The Golf Course site lies in the Gog Magog hills some 6km south-east of Cambridge and about 750m north-east of the A1307 Cambridge to Haverhill road. The land slopes down some 25m from south-west to north-east over a distance of about 500m, falling from c 70m OD in the west to 45m OD on the eastern boundary of the site.

The site lies within the Icknield Way zone, which runs north-east to south-west through south Cambridgeshire, across a band of Middle Chalk. The Gog Magogs are an outcrop from this, projecting north-west into the area of Lower Chalk and River Terrace Gravels on which sit the villages of Stapleford, to the south-west, and Fulbourn, to the north-east (BGS 205). The chalk is partly capped by glacial gravels which intrude into the north-western part of the Golf Course site, with chalky marl at least 0.8m deep forming the subsoil along the north-eastern boundary of the site (Welsh 1993).

Prior to the present development the site was under arable cultivation, although it had been used as paddocks for a few years after the War (Welsh, *ibid.*).

## 3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The area around the Golf Course site includes significant features of all periods from the Neolithic to the Roman, but the landscape is dominated by the Iron Age earthworks of Wandlebury some 250m to the south-west (Fig. 1).

Lithic finds of late Mesolithic/earlier Neolithic type are known from various locations in the area, including the southern part of the site where an evaluation trench revealed a pit or tree-hole with seven struck flints and a fragment of cattle horn-core (Welsh 1993; and see Fig. 1). Fieldwalking in 1977-78 by the Cambridge Archaeological Field Group (CAFG) in the north-western part of the site had previously recovered parts of two polished flint

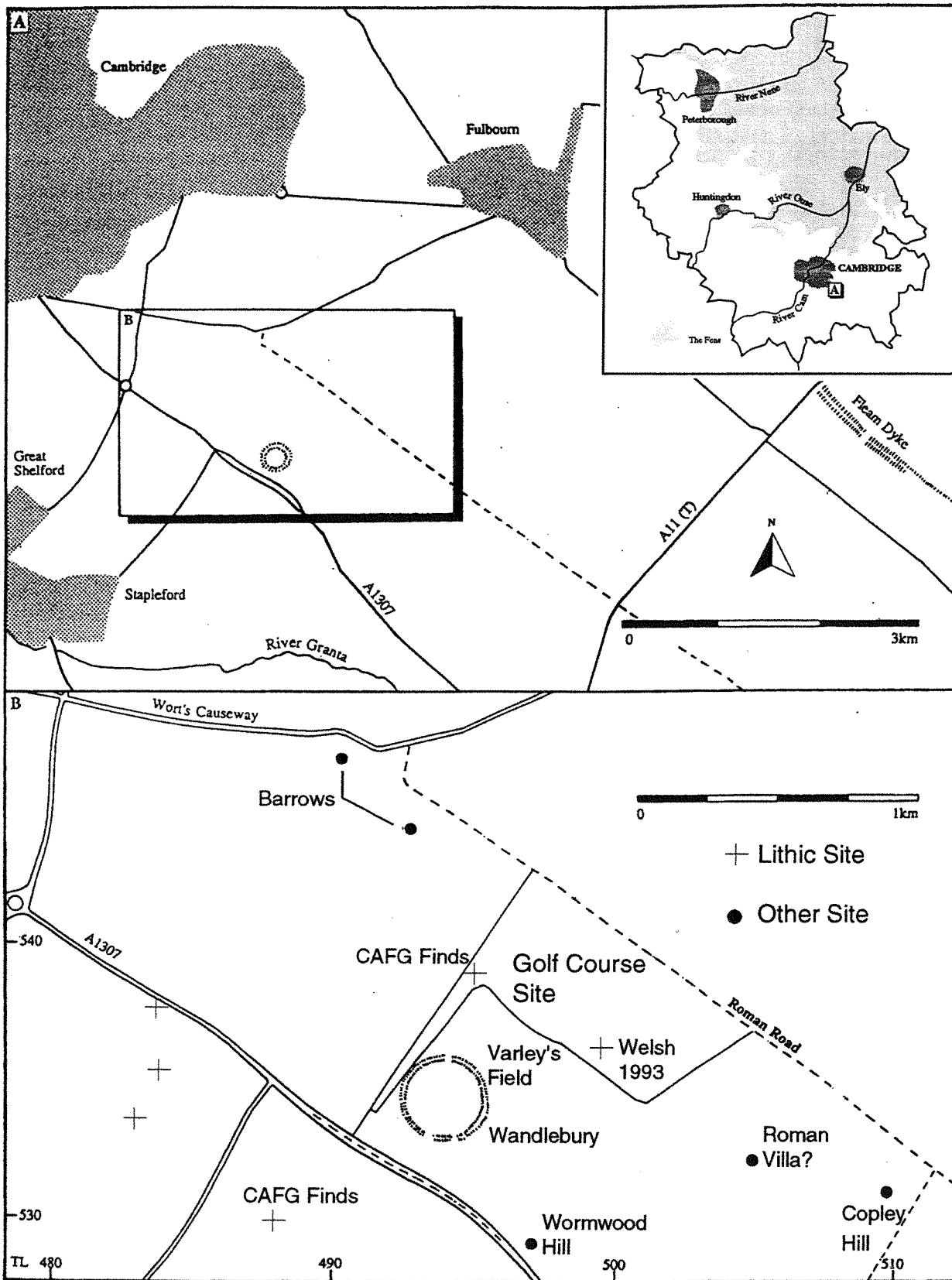


Figure 1 Site Location Plan

axes and a number of struck flints including scrapers (Bradford 1978), also indicative of Neolithic activity. Prehistoric flints of 3rd and 2nd millennium date have been recovered at different times from Varley's Field to the south-west of the present site (French & Gdaniec 1996).

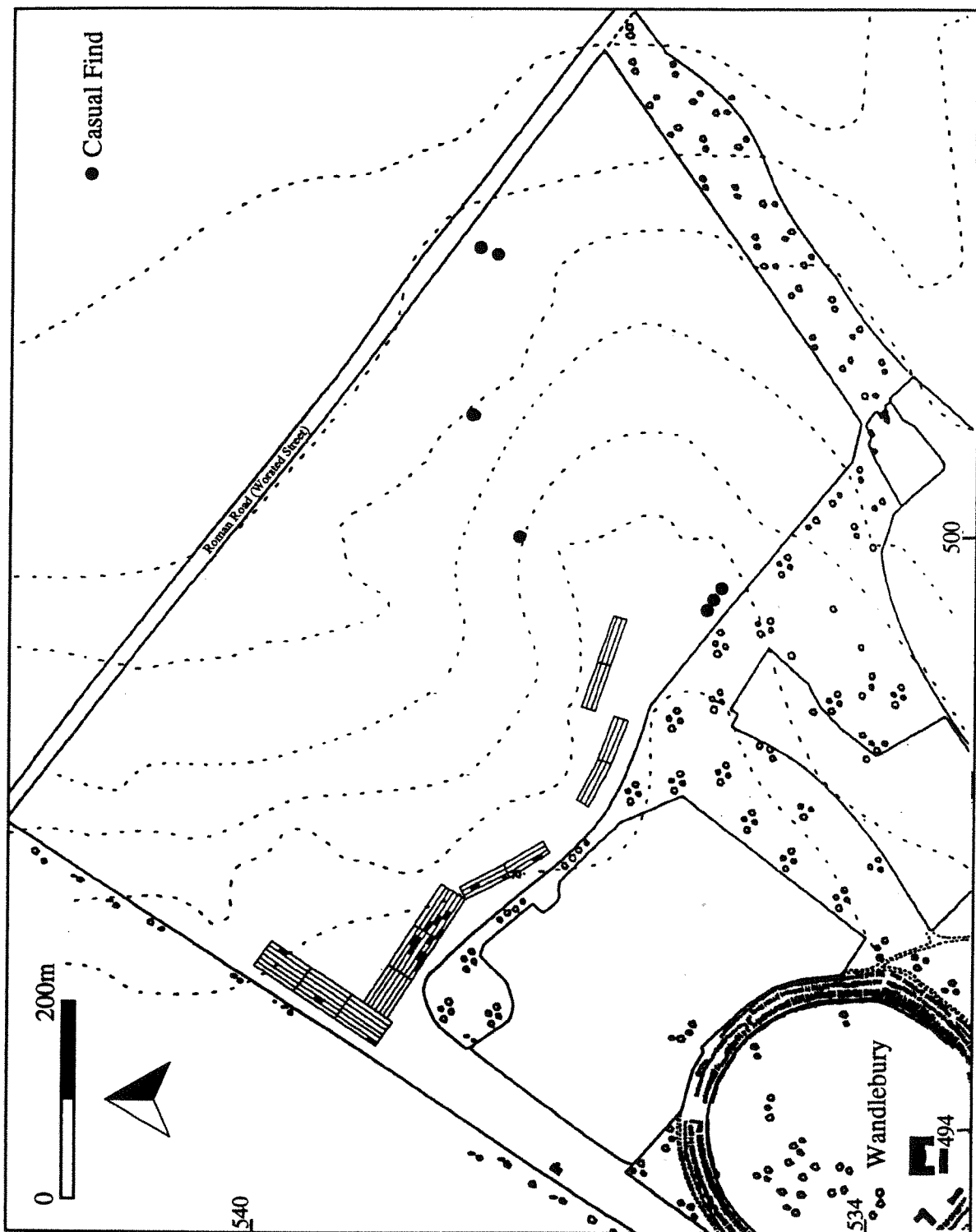
Further lithic finds have been made on land the other side of the A1307 (c TL 489/530), where fieldwalking by the CAFG in 1990-91 found some 40 pieces of worked flint over an area of c 25ha, including scrapers, a denticulate, a biface and a projectile point (CAFG 1992). The density of finds is relatively low but the presence of a number of blades once again suggests a Neolithic date, perhaps related to cropmarks in this field which include part of a possible interrupted ditch enclosure (Cambs SMR 5115). If genuine, this site would be only 6-7km distant from the excavated causewayed enclosure at Great Wilbraham (SMR 6468).

At least three round barrows, presumably of earlier Bronze Age date, are known to have existed on land to the north-west of the Golf Course site but are now destroyed (SMR 5066, 5070). In addition, still extant natural hummocks at Wormwood Hill and Copley Hill, to the south and south-east respectively, may also have been used for burial (SMR 4388, 6317), and ring-ditches are visible on aerial photographs to the south of the A1307 (SMR 8358).

In the earlier Iron Age an unenclosed settlement was established to the south-west of the Golf Course site, marked by pits containing pottery of Cunliffe's (1974) Chinnor-Wandlebury group, dating to c 500-300 BC. In fact Wandlebury represents an eastern outlier of the style, which is primarily concentrated in the Chilterns. Shortly after this occupation a circular univallate earthwork was constructed over part of the settlement. It apparently fell into disuse before being reconstructed in the later Iron Age as a trivallate circular 'hillfort', which survived into the Roman period. The hillfort is sited at the southern end of a small plateau of high ground on the hill-top and therefore commands a view over the valley of the river Granta and the Icknield Way zone to the south rather than the Fen edge to the north - which, like the earlier pottery, may imply something about the relative importance of these different landscape zones at the time.

Excavations at Wandlebury were conducted by Clark and Hartley in 1955-56 (Hartley 1957) and more recently as part of a training programme run by the Department of Archaeology, Cambridge University (French & Gdaniec 1996). As a result of the latter investigations the pre-hillfort settlement is now known to extend beyond the ramparts to the east and into Varley's Field, but not as far as the south-western edge of the Golf Course site.

The Roman Worsted Street or Wool Street (also known as 'Via Devana', a name coined in the 18th century) runs below the Wandlebury hill-top along the north-eastern boundary of the Golf Course site. A section excavated through the Roman road in 1921 by Fox (1923), close to Wandlebury, revealed an agger of chalk and turf with gravel metalling. More recently, work by Dewhurst (1964) during the laying of a gas main led to the suggestion of a pre-Roman origin for the road. An evaluation by the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council in 1991 confirmed that, whatever its origin, Worsted Street was a full Roman road as far as Worsted Lodge, c 4km south-east of Wandlebury (Wait 1991). Evaluation trenches on the Golf Course site found a linear feature parallel to the road and about 40m away. It was undated but could indicate a short-lived alternative route or adjacent field boundary (Welsh 1993). A possible Roman villa site lies a little way to the south-east of the Golf Course site (SMR 6244).



*Figure 2 Location of Fieldwalking Transects, showing findspots (retouched pieces and cores) and approximate location of casual finds during monitoring*



The medieval and post-medieval history of the site is discussed further by Welsh (1993), who notes that the present field boundaries are the same as those laid out at the time of Enclosure in 1812. Wandlebury hillfort was a well-known landscape feature long before this, being described by Daniel Defoe, for instance, as "an antient Camp ... with a treble Rampart and Ditch ... [which] most of our writers say was ... British" (Defoe 1742: 81).

#### 4 METHODOLOGY & RESULTS

A limited programme of intensive fieldwalking was undertaken in order to define the artefactual potential of the ploughsoil and delimit areas for observation during earth-moving.

The likelihood of downslope movement which would have obscured the original distribution of material caused the fieldwalking to be concentrated on the high ground in the western part of the site, where surface finds were more likely to relate to *in situ* deposits (Fig. 2). Selected areas were divided into 5m spaced transects with collection within 10m quadrants. A total of 24 transects and 255 quadrants were walked, of which 67 quadrants produced material - although six of them accounted for nearly half of the total assemblage of 164 pieces (see Appendix). Hence the majority of the flint apparently derived from a small area just to the south-east of the western corner of the site (TL 496/538).

A further nine pieces of worked flint were recovered by casual collecting in the south-eastern half of the site during the subsequent monitoring of earth-moving. This phase of work revealed no features in the machine-stripped areas other than some of periglacial origin, one or two of which were rapidly excavated to confirm their geological nature. Observation of stripping near the eastern boundary of Varley's Field confirmed that Iron Age features do not extend beyond the area investigated by French & Gdaniec (1996).

#### 5 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

A number of salient points may be made in relation to the worked flint report by Tim Reynolds (Appendix). With one exception, all the retouched pieces and cores (Fig. 3) derive from the western corner of the field, which is the highest point of the site. The cores group very closely, with the retouched pieces lying just downslope from them. This seems to be spatially and typologically a very coherent assemblage and suggests a discrete occupation scatter which probably extends to the south-west into Varley's Field, where lithics occurred in every test pit during the training excavation (French & Gdaniec 1996). Reynolds suggests the Golf Course assemblage is late Mesolithic on the basis of the microlith and burins, although the CAFG finds of scrapers and polished axes from much the same area imply a Neolithic date or, more probably, a separate phase of activity.

These finds lie some distance from the lithics in Welsh's evaluation Trench C (see above), which lay just off the hill-top, and the latter group was generally patinated in contrast to the well-preserved fieldwalking assemblage. Different formation processes are therefore implied and the two groups, although probably of similar date, cannot be directly related.

Clearly the Wandlebury hill-top was an attractive location for settlement throughout prehistory, and activity there covers a long span of time down to the end of the Iron Age. In contrast, the eastern hill-slope, which takes in much of the Golf Course site, has relatively little evidence for occupation despite the presence of Worsted Street below. That part of the site which lies on the hill-top, however, has now revealed one or more locations of Mesolithic activity, further extending the range of periods represented on the Gog Magog hills. Moreover the assemblage has high integrity as evidence of a manufacturing site (see Appendix). The combination of production evidence and formal tools like the utilised microlith would seem to imply a base camp although the hilltop situation is a little unusual. However, it would have been an ideal location for a hunting stand, and the lithic material may therefore indicate repeated temporary occupation. Whatever its origin, the assemblage is, as Reynolds states, relevant to any broader understanding of Mesolithic exploitation of the chalk uplands of south Cambridgeshire.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The AFU wishes to thank the Gog Magog Golf Club for funding the project, and Tim Reynolds for the worked flint report. The project was managed by Ben Robinson.

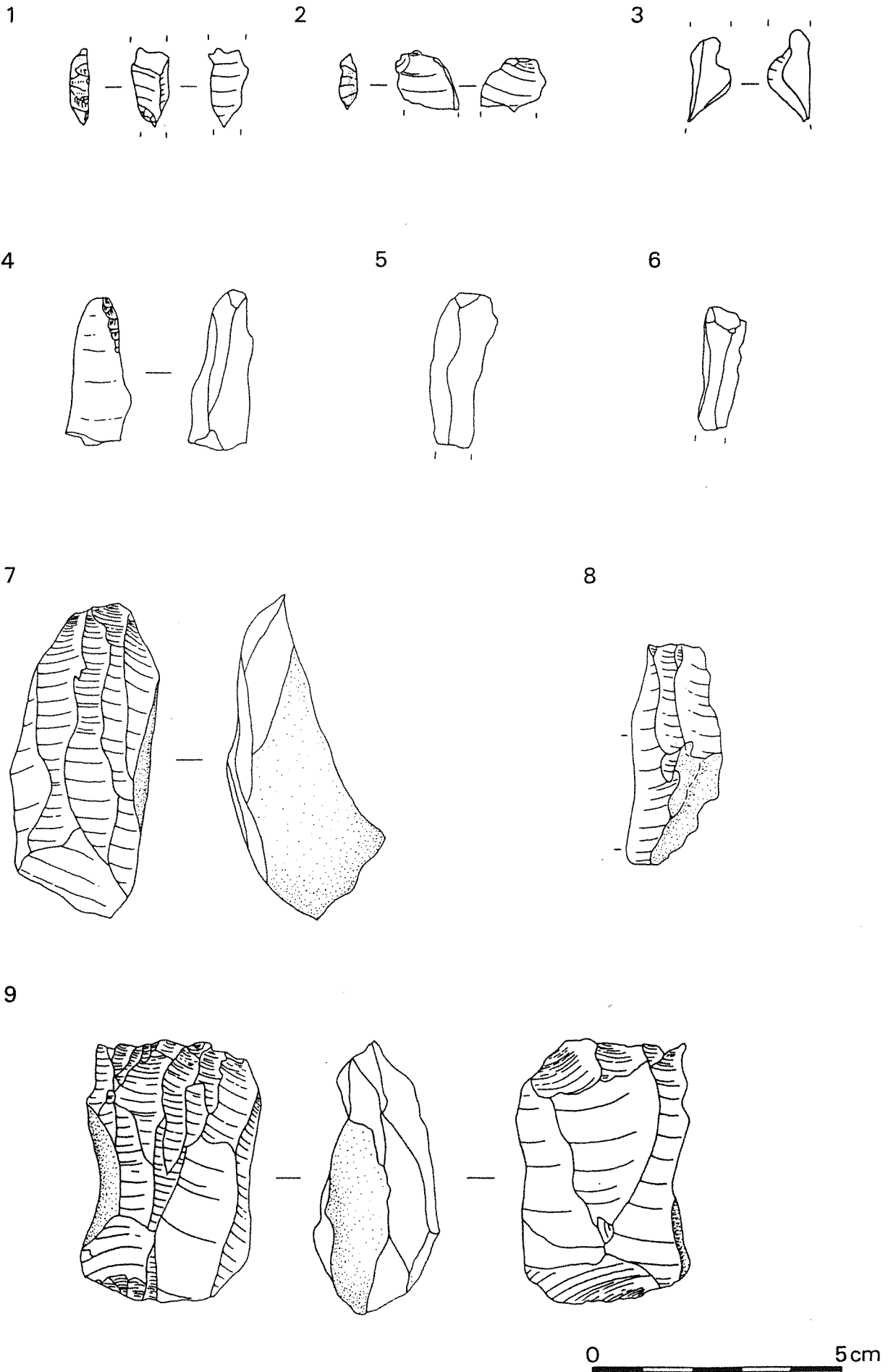
#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- BGS 205. British Geological Survey One-Inch Series (Drift edn.), Sheet 205.
- Bradford, L.J. 1978. The Cambridge Archaeological Field Group: first report. *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society* 68: xi-xiii.
- CAFG 1992. Cambridge Archaeology Field Group Magog Trust Downland Park Surface Survey 1990/1. Phase 1: worked flint, interim report 1992.
- Cambs SMR. Cambridgeshire County Council Sites & Monuments Record.
- Cunliffe, B. 1974. *Iron Age Communities in Britain*. London: Routledge.
- Defoe, D. 1742. *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain* (3rd edn.).
- Dewhurst P.C. 1964. Wool Street, Cambridgeshire. *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society* 56/57: 42-60.
- Fox, C. 1923. Excavations in the Cambridgeshire Dykes. I. Preliminary investigations: excavations at Worsted Street. *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society* 24: 21-27.
- French, C.A.I & Gdaniec, K. 1996. Wandlebury Hillfort, Cambridgeshire, 1995: the training excavation of the University of Cambridge, summary report 2. *Cambridge Archaeological Unit*.

Hartley, B.R. 1957. The Wandlebury Iron Age hill-fort: excavations of 1955-6. *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society* 50: 1-27.

Wait, G.A. 1991. Worsted Street Roman Road, Mount Farm, Fulbourn: an interim report. *Cambridgeshire Archaeology Report* 44.

Welsh, K. 1993. Gog Magog Golf Course Extension: an archaeological assessment. *Cambridgeshire Archaeology Report* 83.



**Figure 3** *Lithic Finds from Fieldwalking (see Appendix for descriptions)*

## APPENDIX: Worked Flint Report, Gog Magog Golf Course

Tim Reynolds

### Summary

*Gridded fieldwalking at the Gog Magog Golf Course site has yielded a total of 164 pieces of flint (both worked and burnt), weighing 682g, from 67 quadrants. The assemblage shows a relatively high density of material and several retouched tools were recovered, including a microlith, burins and endscrapers. Technologically, the collection is dominated by the production of blades and bladelets, with the latter more common. The material seems to have high integrity and represents a late Mesolithic activity site where tool-making was important. This collection has potential to contribute to our understanding of the late Mesolithic in the area, since the large ploughzone Fenland Mesolithic sites need contemporary upland comparatives.*

### Introduction

A total collection of 164 flints derived from 67 quadrants, which includes burnt material, although this was relatively rare. Retouched pieces are also rare and the bulk of recovered material from all quadrants comprises knapping debris. Cores are relatively common. No projectile points were recovered, unless a single microlith is included, but this piece had glossing on both edges and is therefore unlikely to have been used in that way. A group of the six richest quadrants supplied 45% of the entire collection, so distinct peaks occur in the distribution of the flint assemblage. This distribution may reflect activity areas within the prehistoric site but post-depositional sorting needs to be ruled out before this can be confirmed.

### Typology

Recognisable retouched forms are rare, but the following list identifies such pieces and the quadrants from which they derive:

<i>Tool Type</i>	<i>Quadrant</i>	<i>Figure</i>
Endscaper	A140	
Endscraper	J10	
Microlith	M50	3.1
Microburin	F20	3.2
Burin	K80	
Burin Spall	K40	3.3
Burin Spall	K110	
Knife (utilised blade)	M30	3.8
Truncated flake	J50	
Truncated blade	L60	
Inversely retouched bladelet	B80	3.4

Typologically, this collection would fit a late Mesolithic/early Neolithic date but the presence of the microlith makes the late Mesolithic date more likely. The presence of the microlith and burin spalls also suggests recovery has been above average for field surface collection.

## Technology

Amongst the cores (listed below) bladelet production dominates and this is also reflected in the assemblage as a whole, where bladelets comprise the bulk of material collected. The few flakes that are present could be the result of the manufacture of the bladelet cores, whilst the remainder are blade-flakes. All the retouched tools are on either blades, bladelets or blade-flakes. The presence of burins and burin spalls suggests tool-making in wood, bone or antler was taking place and the overall pattern of technology suggests a manufacturing site.

<i>Core Type</i>	<i>Quadrant</i>	<i>Figure</i>
Single platform, bladelet	J180	3.7
Ditto	N30	
Opposed Platform, bladelet	J20	3.9
Single Platform, microflake	K20	
Ditto	M20	

<i>Other Drawn Pieces</i>	<i>Quadrant</i>	<i>Figure</i>
Bladelets	L30	3.5-6

## Condition

The bulk of the collection is in fresh condition and unpatinated. Plough damage is rare whilst edge damage due to soil movement and trampling, such as half-moon lateral snaps, is the dominant damage pattern. This is surprising because plough damage would normally be more frequent than experienced here. The burnt material is not too degraded and can be examined for signs of working - although this is generally absent. Some traces of possible utilisation of tools were observed and glossing was seen on both edges of the microlith: has this piece been used for harvesting cereals?

Patination is beginning to affect some pieces and would preclude some forms of use-wear analysis. Conjoining could be attempted to examine the question of activity areas further, as the collection is small in size, but it might not be effective because the material is from the surface.

## Raw Materials

The material used is fresh chalk flint with a thin cortex cover. This probably derives from the local chalk and there is little evidence to suggest systematic use of river gravel sources. The flint used is almost entirely grey-black in colour and relatively dense. Some brown and honey-coloured material has been used, but this is rare.

## Conclusions

Technologically, it would be reasonable to assign the blade/bladelet series of pieces to a late Mesolithic/early Neolithic date. Typologically, the presence of a microlith and burins would support a late Mesolithic date.

The individual sample sizes are small but sample integrity seems to be high. General edge conditions are suitable for both refitting and use-wear studies, and these methods

could be considered in further work. In terms of research potential, the dataset has relevance not just in terms of site history, but also for the study of prehistoric settlement and exploitation of the river valley as a whole. There are extensive surface collections from both Hinxton and Duxford parishes as well as samples from evaluations and excavations at Hinxton Quarry and Duxford Mill. Thus the collection has potential to add to the developing area picture.



**Cambridgeshire  
County Council**

**Archaeology**

The Archaeological Field Unit  
Fulbourn Community Centre  
Haggis Gap  
Fulbourn  
Cambridge CB1 5HD  
Tel (01223) 881614  
Fax (01223) 880946