

Kingsdown Gallops
Upper Lambourn
West Berkshire



Archaeological Watching Brief



Oxford Archaeology

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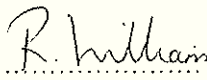
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Kingsdown Gallops, Upper Lambourn, West Berkshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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SUMMARY

In April and June 2002 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Kingsdown Gallops, Upper Lambourn, West Berkshire (NGR SU 3025 8120). The work was commissioned by Mountgrange Farms and Stables Ltd in advance of the construction of gallops and associated drainage. The watching brief revealed two archaeological features, a posthole and a late Neolithic pit. Also Roman pottery from farming activity was recovered from the colluvium layer on the valley floor at the south end of the site.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In April and June 2002 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Kingsdown Gallops, Upper Lambourn, West Berkshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mountgrange Farms and Stable Ltd in respect of a planning application for new gallops and associated drainage (Planning Application No.01/02402/FUL).
- 1.1.2 A project brief was discussed between Mountgrange Farms and Stables Ltd and Veronica Fiorato of West Berkshire Heritage Service, and with Oxford Archaeology (OA).
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The underlying geology is solid chalk and the site lies at c. 135 m OD. The site is situated northwest of Upper Lambourn in West Berkshire in an area of farmland.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for the WSI for the project (OA, 2002) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 The Lambourn Downs are rich in archaeological remains of the prehistoric period. Some 20 barrows are known at "Seven Barrows" to the northeast of this development site and further north lie the renowned Neolithic and Iron Age sites of Wayland's Smithy and Uffington Castle.
- 1.3.3 A Bronze Age site with Romano-British at Ashbury Tower Hill was partly excavated in 1993 by Oxford Archaeology (formerly Oxford Archaeological Unit, OAU). Work at a similar gallops site at East Ilsley 1994 revealed Bronze Age pits.
- 1.3.4 In 1990 carried out an evaluation at Weathercock House, Upper Lambourn that revealed prehistoric flints and demonstrated that a mound in the garden of the

property was of 14th century date. In 1994 OAU carried out a watching brief at Trabb's Farm, Seven Barrows though no archaeological features were observed.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The 5 m wide length of track was stripped with a 360⁰ machine to a depth of 0.40 m below the surface. This was undertaken after the drainage had been laid within a trench cutting along and across the length of the gallop.
- 2.2.2 All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:100 and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All excavated features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 The groundwork for the access road at the south end of the site and the south end of the gallop exposed a 0.2 – 0.3 m thick layer of dark grey brown silty clay loam (1) topsoil. This overlay a light reddish brown silty clay (2) colluvium deposit on the base of the valley floor. At the northwest end of the gallop on top of the down, a dark reddish brown silty clay (9) subsoil with sarsen boulders was identified (Fig. 2). Both these layers overlay the natural chalk (3). A number of plough marks were observed cutting into the chalk as well as a few natural features and root holes filled with a light brown silty clay with chalk fragments.
- 3.1.2 Two features were exposed in the middle section of the gallop sealed beneath the topsoil (1). The first was an undated circular post hole (7) with vertical sides and flat base measuring 0.34 m x 0.09 m, which was filled by a light brown silty clay (8) (Figs 2, 3 & 4, section 2).
- 3.1.3 The second feature was a sub circular pit (4) with vertical side and flat base cut into the chalk measuring 1.2 x 0.9 x 0.17 m, which contained two fills. The first fill was a light greyish brown silty clay (6) at the base of the pit. This was overlain by a dark brown silty clay loam (5) containing fragments of bone and flint (Figs 2, 3 & 4, section 1). The finds assemblage indicates a late Neolithic date for the pit, although as with many prehistoric pits its function is uncertain.

3.2 Finds

Flint

- 3.2.1 A total of 19 flint artifacts, including a single fragment (7g) of burnt unworked flint and a hammerstone, were recovered (Table 1). A possible fragment of a quartzitic sandstone hammerstone was also recovered. The assemblage was contained entirely within context 5, the upper fill of pit 3. The material constitutes a small but coherent assemblage of probable late Neolithic date, which is implied by the presence of datable types including a petit tranchet arrowhead. The fresh condition suggests the minimum of post-depositional disturbance, and it is likely that the flint work represents an *in-situ* deposit.

Table 1: flint by type.

Category:	Number of flints:
Flake	9
Blade-like flake	2
Flake core fragment	1
Retouched flake	2
Serrated flake	1
Side scraper	1
Petit tranchet arrowhead	1
Hammerstone	1
Burnt unworked flint	1
Total:	19

Methodology

- 3.2.2 All the flints within the assemblage were individually examined and were catalogued using an MS Access database according to broad artifact/débitage type. Technological information was recorded throughout the analysis, particularly where such data contributed to the characterisation of the assemblage. Dating was attempted where possible. Further observations with regard to the condition, degree of cortication, and type of raw material were commented on where appropriate. Cores and core fragments were classified according to the organization and types of removals exhibited, and were individually weighed. Burnt flint was described and quantified by piece and by weight. Additional information, such as the degree of calcination, was recorded where relevant.

Condition

- 3.2.3 With the exception of limited areas of modern excavation damage, the assemblage was in a pristine condition, which implies negligible post-depositional disturbance. A total of 15 flints (78.9%) exhibited a heavy cortication, appearing as a dense white discolouration of the surface. The remaining assemblage, consisting of four pieces or

21.1%, displayed a moderate degree of cortication. A calcium carbonate concretion was noted on nine pieces (47.4%).

Raw material

- 3.2.4 For the most part, the raw material employed for the manufacture of the tools and débitage appears to have been a good quality chalk flint, characterised by a thick buff-colored cortex and a fine-grained interior. Some cortical staining and abrasion was noted, which suggests that the nodules were collected from surface deposits rather than mined. A single flake of a gravel-derived flint was also recorded. It is most likely that these raw materials were obtained from locally occurring sources.

Technology and dating

- 3.2.5 Flakes formed the dominant artifact type within the assemblage, and were represented by a total of nine pieces or 47.4%. The majority of these were relatively large, with plain and unbraided platforms. Only two blade-like flakes were present, which is consistent with a late Neolithic date, (Ford 1987). The hammermode seems to have been mixed, with both hard and soft percussion used for the production of flakes.
- 3.2.6 The assemblage contained a probable fragment of a broken, heavily calcined flake core (72g), which exhibited a small number of flake removals. No platform preparation was noted, and the hammermode was indeterminate. The flint hammerstone, weighing 214g, probably constitutes a reused multi-platform flake core. It is possible to distinguish a number of earlier flake scars that have been partially obscured by later crushing. A second hammerstone fragment (132g), manufactured from quartzitic sandstone of probable non-local origin, was also recovered.
- 3.2.7 The retouched component is represented by a total of 5 pieces (26.3%). Two edge-retouched flakes were recovered, both of which displayed use-damage. The serrated flake, which was manufactured on a slightly curving, tertiary flake blank, exhibited serrations and edge-gloss to the left-hand edge and steep backing retouch to the right-hand edge. The side-scraper had been neatly made on a broad tertiary flake, the right hand edge of which had been abruptly retouched. Some use-wear was also noted on this piece. The petit tranchet arrowhead is similar to Green's type a or type b (Green, 1980). The use-damage to the main tranchet edge may have been incurred through impact.
- 3.2.8 Considered as a whole, the assemblage is distinguished by a high proportion of both retouch and use-wear. A total of 11 pieces or 57.9% exhibited macroscopically detectable use-damage; this figure would undoubtedly increase given a microscopic analysis. The number and range of retouched artifacts is also of note, and it is conceivable that the assemblage reflects a range of domestic activities rather than specialized activity or knapping.

Pottery and Animal Bone

- 3.2.9 Ten fragments of animal bone were also recovered from the fill of the pit (3). These were in poor condition and exhibited had no signs of being butchered. The bones were identified as belonging to sheep, goat and a cow.
- 3.2.10 From the cullvium layer (2) in the area of the entrance from the road and hard standing, a number of fragments of fired clay was recovered as well as three sherds of pottery. These were Roman and dated from 2nd Century or later and consisted of two fragments of North Wiltshire grey ware and a fragment of Savernake ware.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No samples were taken during the course of the watching brief.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The results from the watching brief exposed two archaeological features. These were a posthole of unknown date. The second was a late Neolithic pit containing an interesting flint artefact assemblage suggesting prehistoric activity in the area of development. Fragments of Roman pottery recovered from the cullvium layer at the base of the down appear to be from cultivation from the Roman period.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Depth	Width	Length	Comments	Finds
1	Layer				Topsoil	
2	Layer				Culluivum in valley base	Pottery and fired clay
3	Natural				Chalk with flint	
4	Cut	0.17 m	0.90 m	1.20 m	Rubbish Pit	
5	Fill				Upper Fill	Flint, Bone and fragment of Stone
6	Fill				Lower Fill	
7	Cut	0.09 m	0.34 m Ø		Post Hole	
8	Fill				Fill	
9	Layer				Sub soil top of Down	

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Ford, S. *Chronological and functional aspects of flint assemblages*. In Brown and Edmonds, 1987. Lithic analysis and later British Prehistory. BAR 162.

Green, S.H. 1980. *The flint arrowheads of the British Isles*. Part I. BAR British Series 75(I).

OA, 2002, *Kingsdown Gallops, Upper Lambourn, West Berkshire*. Written Scheme of Investigation

D Wilkinson, 1992, *OAU Fieldwork Manual*.

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Kingsdown Gallops, Upper Lambourn, West Berkshire

Site code: LAUCK 02

Grid reference: NGR SU 3025 8120

Type of watching brief: Construction of new gallops and associated drainage.

Date and duration of project: A total of nine site visits from the 29/04/2002 to 25/06/2002.

Area of site: 2 km²

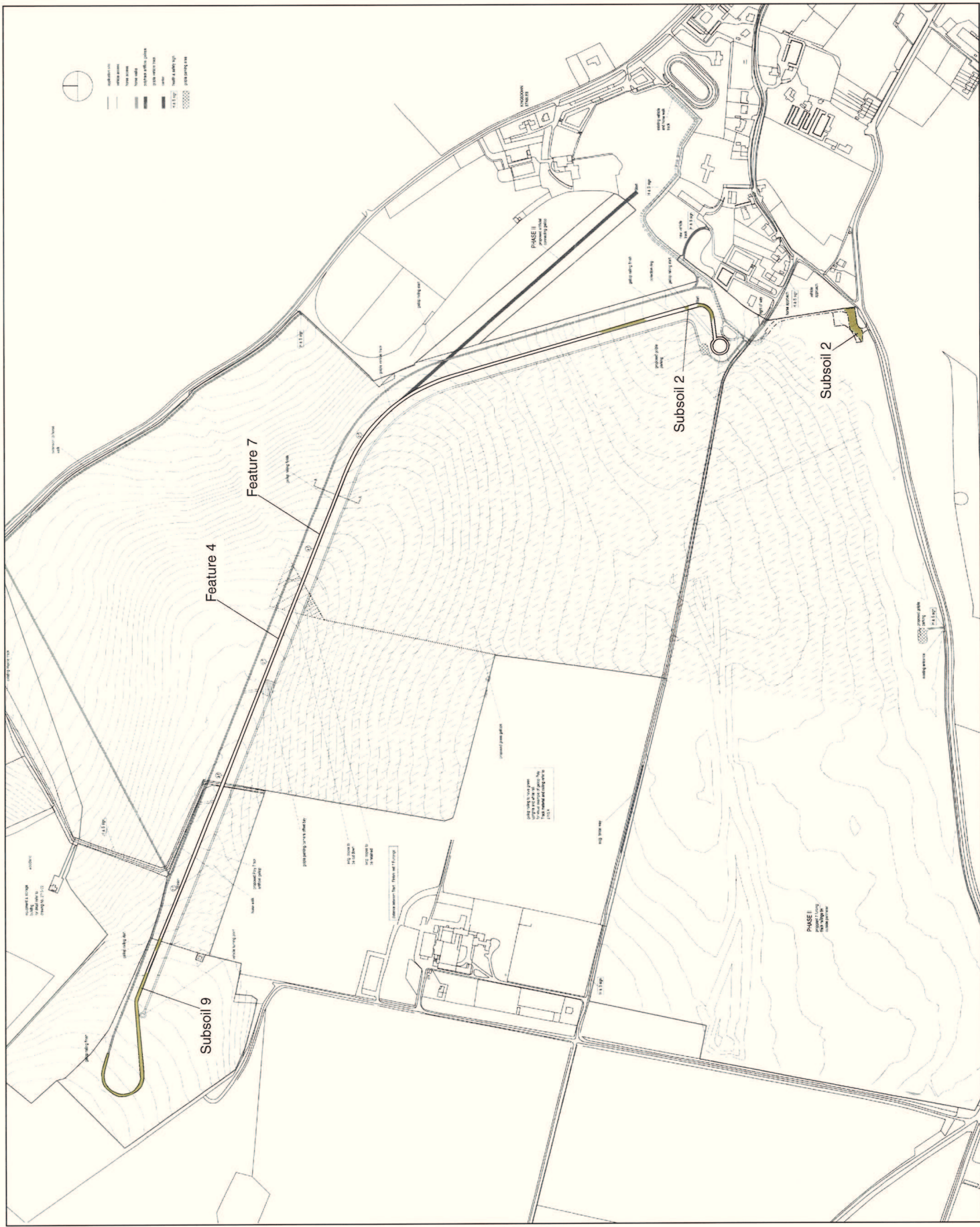
Summary of results: Two archaeological features were exposed, a posthole and a late Neolithic pit. Also Roman pottery from farming activity in that period was recovered from the culluivum layer on the valley floor.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with West Berks. Heritage Service, The Wharf, Newbury, Berks, RG14 5AS in due course, under the following accession number: NEBYM 2002.4



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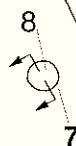
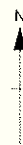
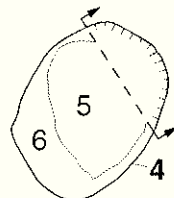
Figure 1 Site location.



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Figure 2 Course of Gallop, subsoils 2 & 9 and location of features 4 & 7.

Drain centre of track



Drain centre of track



Figure 3 Plans 3 & 4.

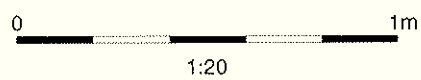
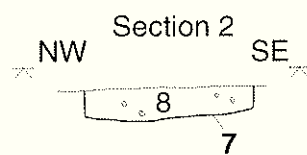
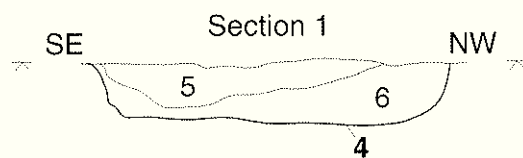


Figure 4 Sections 1 & 2.



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