

Field Survey at Chatley Farm, Cobham



*Coin of Magnentius (AD 350-353)
recovered during the survey*

Audrey and David Graham

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Field Survey at Chatley Farm, Cobham 2003 (centred TQ 0880 5940)

Following on from the successful gridded field survey at Chiddingfold last year (SyAS Bulletin 362), Dr David Bird suggested that a similar exercise be carried out in the field adjacent to the Roman bath house at Chatley Farm. The building was first noticed in 1942 exposed in a river bluff formed by the Mole, which flows just to the east of Chatley Farm. The site was subsequently excavated by Sheppard Frere (1949) and turned out to be a bath house of 4th century date. Frere however failed to find any further buildings in the vicinity and suggested that these had originally lain to the east of the bath house and had subsequently been completely removed by the action of the river.

In 1979 the field containing the bath house was subject to deep ploughing and Mrs Ann Watson visited the site and recovered a quantity of Roman tile and pottery. As a result Rob Poulton and Martin O'Connell carried out a limited geophysical survey and excavated three trenches (Poulton 1986), none of which produced evidence for any further structures within the field, though the trench nearest the bath house, in particular, produced quantities of Roman tile and pottery. More recently, Mr Sidney Pennington, the farmer, has reported ploughing up lines of tiles.

Over the last year or two the Roman Studies Group has been trying to locate the line of the probable Winchester to London road which might, according to one current theory, pass through or close by Chatley Farm. As a result David Bird felt it was worth revisiting the site to see if any more information could be obtained using the same techniques that were so successful at Chiddingfold.

A team from the Society spent five days in early September collecting material from within a series of 10m grid squares linked to the OS grid and set out over part of the field (fig 1, Area 1 and fig 2). All the material was processed and recorded by weight and count and then returned to its square of origin. The exercise is therefore repeatable in future. As the field was still under stubble and parts were obscured by weeds only the clearer sections were gridded, the remainder of the field being line walked without material being picked up and quantified. No significant finds were made during this latter operation.

The results (Fig 3) seem to indicate that the scatter of Roman material originates from the bath house itself and that, at least within the area examined, there are no other obvious concentrations of tile or pottery indicative of further buildings. All datable material recovered, including a large sherd from a Nene Valley beaker and a coin of Magnentius (AD 350-353), belong to the later Roman period and would be consistent with a point of origin at the fourth century bath house itself. A series of auger holes was taken in a line south-east of, but away from, the bath house (which is a scheduled monument - Surrey no. 165) and was extended into neighbouring field which occupies slightly higher ground (fig 1, areas 1 & 2). The results consistently showed a depth of about 0.35m of grey sandy topsoil directly overlying the natural sand of the Bagshot Beds. In no case was there any evidence for occupation or building debris. A small sondage (fig1, Area 2 A) was cut by hand on the higher ground to obtain a clearer view of the soil profile, but again there was no sign of occupation material. The same field was surveyed with a metal detector, again with negative results. The field immediately to the south west of the farm buildings (fig1, Area 3) was under stubble and was rapidly field walked with negative results.

The lack of evidence for the existence of further Roman buildings within the area examined does not mean that none exist elsewhere and neither does it mean that the possible line of an east-west road does not pass through or near to the farm. Indeed there is an apparent driveway, just to the south of the survey area, the alignment of which would be appropriate for a road heading towards London from Winchester.

However the evidence from the survey itself points to Frere's and Poulton's conclusions being largely correct - ie that any villa closely associated with the bath house is likely to have been washed away by the action of the river.

Apart from material from the Roman period, there were two concentrations of burnt and worked flint, including two scrapers and a number of blades, within the gridded area (fig 4) which must relate to activity in the prehistoric period - probably the Mesolithic. A badly damaged barbed-and-tanged arrowhead and a few sherds of prehistoric pottery were recovered but the quantities involved were not sufficient to yield any meaningful distribution pattern. Only one sherd of medieval date was noted. While there was a general scatter of post-medieval tile there was very little recent pottery and strangely only four pieces of clay pipe were recorded. This is most unusual for a Surrey field and perhaps indicates a very low intensity of agricultural activity until fairly recent times. One fragment of shrapnel and a rifle bullet case perhaps result from military training during one of the two World Wars. Possible building material, largely in the form of large black flint nodules, none of which however showed traces of mortar, was also collected and weighed. These lay in a fairly even scatter across the gridded area of the field and are therefore not obviously connected with the bath house. Since large flint nodules should not occur naturally in the Bagshot Beds, these have presumably been imported on to the site but at what period and for what purpose is unclear.

A rapid topographical survey of the field shows that the bath house is sited just above low-lying ground which may well have been wet in the Roman period and might conceivably have been the water source for the bath house.

Thanks are due Angela Arathoon, Nigel Forder, Alan Hall, Pauline Hulse, Sue and John Janaway, Gillian Lachelin, Cordelia Lamont, Kate Pickering, Bernard Polack, Geoff Stonehouse, David Taylor, Charles van der Lande, Richard Wall all of whom helped with the actual field survey. Caroline Felton, Roger Minty and Kate Pickering (who found the coin), carried out the detector survey. David Williams identified the coin, David Bird made the background arrangements and Mr and Mrs Pennington kindly gave permission for the work to be carried out.

Audrey and David Graham
12 September 2003

References

- Frere, S, 1946 The excavation of a late Roman bath-house at Chatley Farm, Cobham, *Surrey Archaeological Collections*, 50, 73-98
Poulton R, 1986 Roman material from Chatley Farm, Cobham, *Surrey Archaeological Collections*, 77, 229--31



Fig 1 Chatley Farm field survey, 2003.

1: Field partially gridded and fieldwalked 2: field surveyed by metal detector (A = site of small test trench); 3: field inspected. + = site of auger hole.

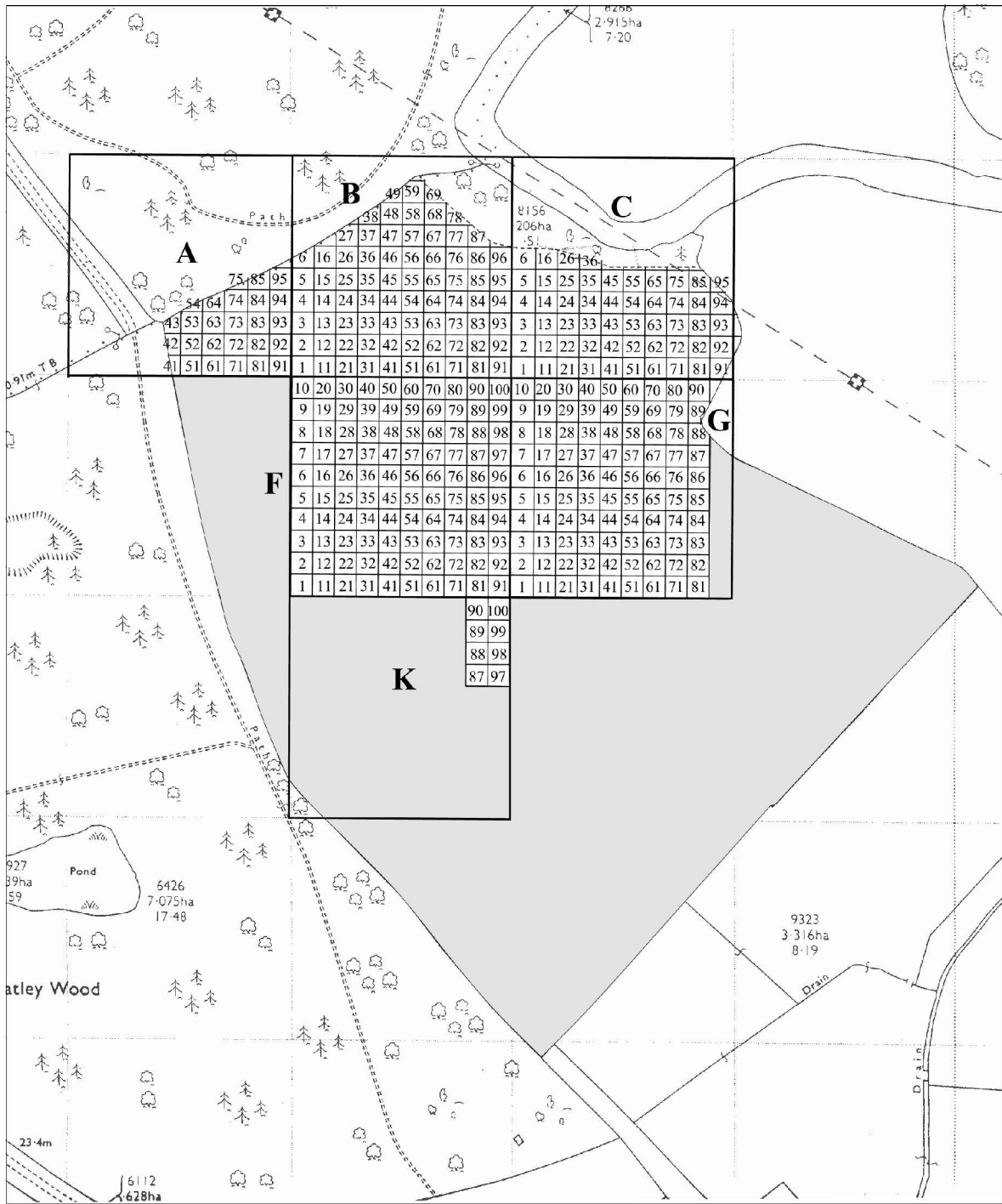


Fig 2 Chatley Farm field survey, 2003.
 Areas subjected to detailed survey on 10m grid (A-C, F, F and K).
 Area line walked (tone).

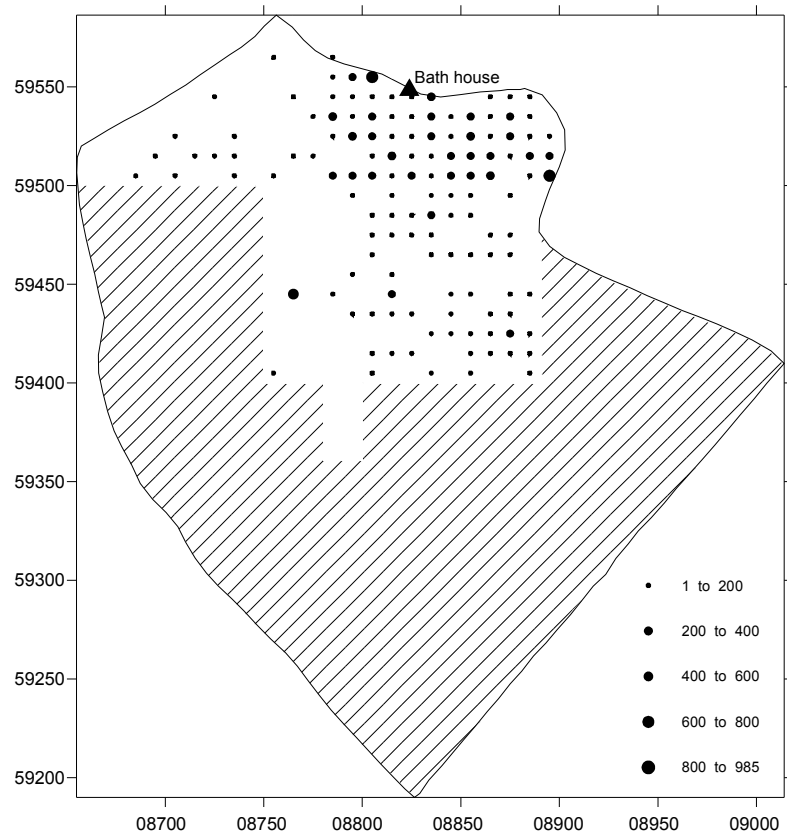
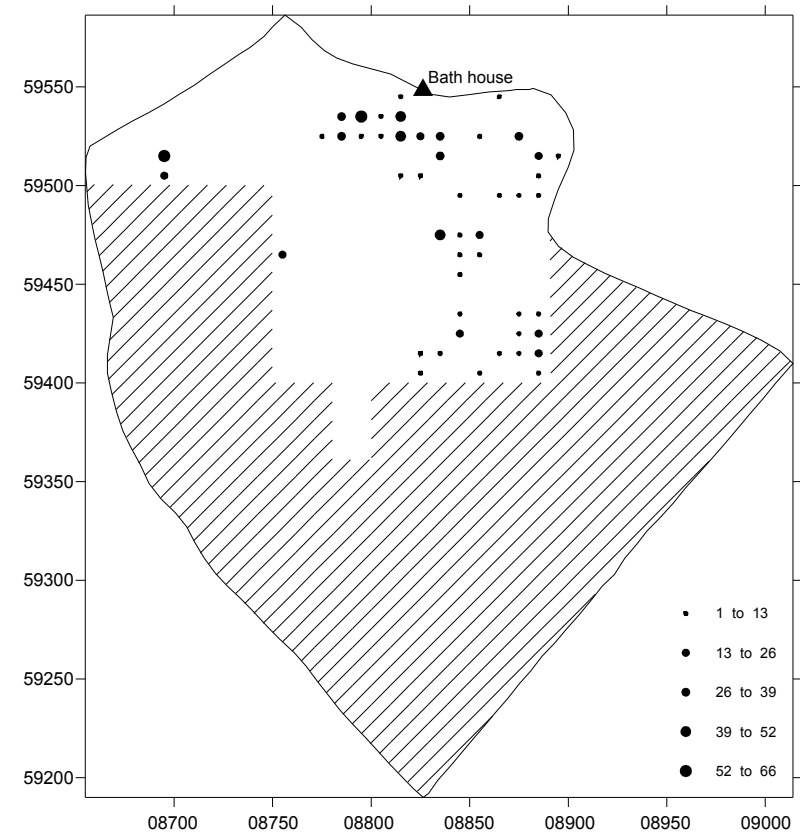


Fig 3 Chatley Farm field survey, 2003
RB ceramic building material by weight (g)



Distribution of RB pottery by weight (g)

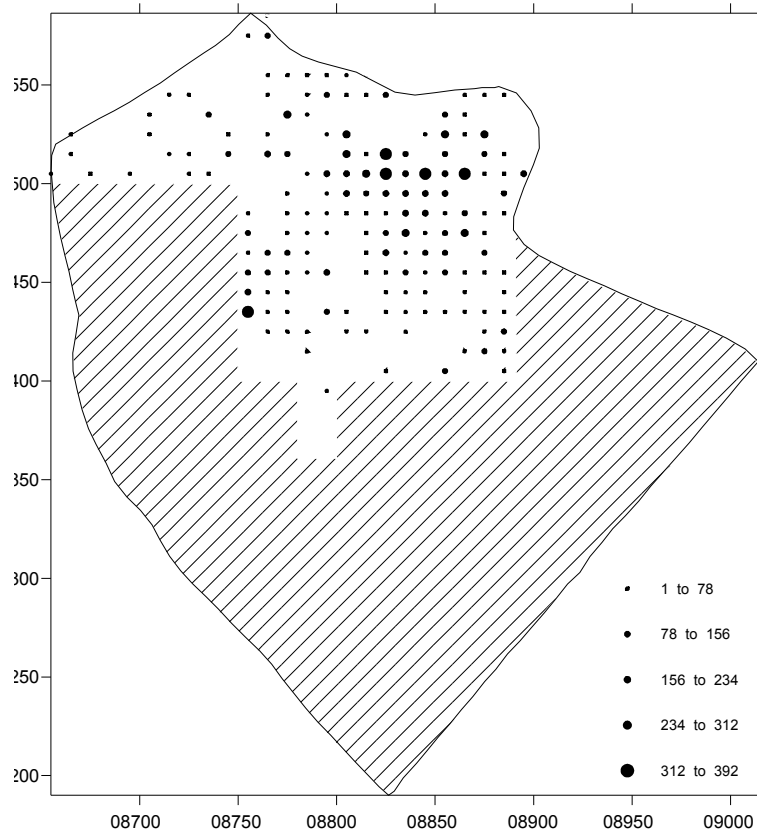
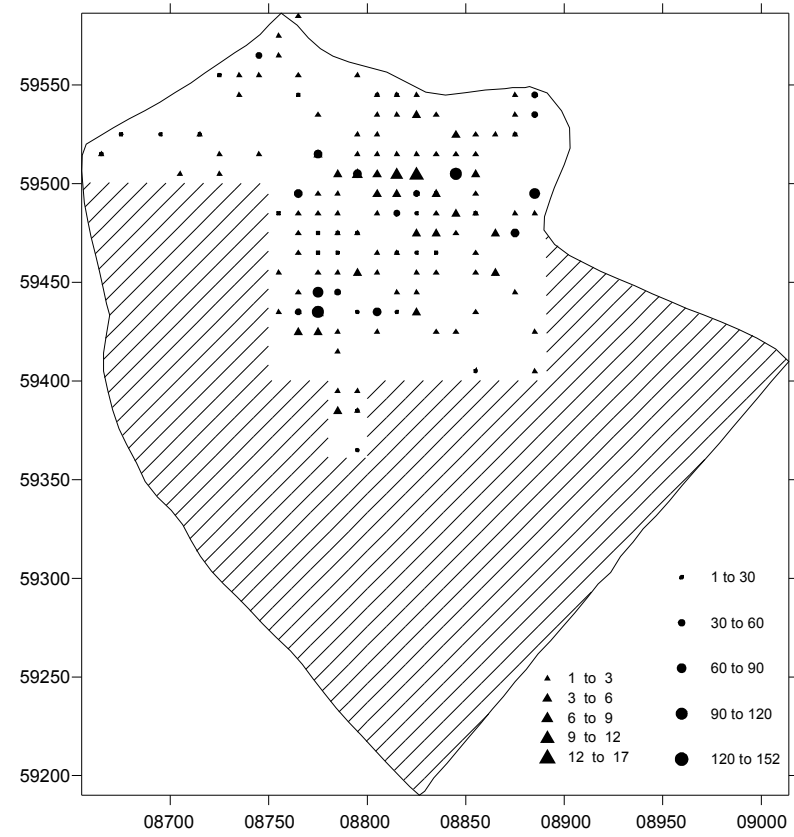


Fig 4 Chatley Farm field survey, 2003
Distribution of burnt flint by weight (g)



Distribution of worked flint by number (triangles) and debitage (circles) by weight (g)

Grid sq	E	N	RB cbm wt (g)	Poss RB bldg mat. wt (g)	RB pot wt (g)	Burnt flint wt (g)	Blades/flakes no	Debitage wt (g)	Prehist pot wt (g)	Frit/slag wt (g)	PM pot wt (g)	Clay pipe no	PM bldg mat wt (g)
A51	8655	59505	0	0	0	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A52	8655	59515	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A61	8665	59505	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	181
A62	8665	59515	0	0	0	54	1	11	0	0	0	1	15
A63	8665	59525	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A71	8675	59505	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	1	0	395
A72	8675	59515	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	49	0	117
A73	8675	59525	0	0	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	48
A81	8685	59505	12	223	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	94
A82	8685	59515	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	156
A83	8685	59525	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	90	0	79
A84	8685	59535	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	0	0
A91	8695	59505	0	0	13	43	0	0	0	0	138	0	621
A92	8695	59515	65	0	65	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	484
A93	8695	59525	0	516	0	0	0	18	0	0	0	0	49
A94	8695	59535	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A95	8695	59545	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B1	8705	59505	15	560	0	0	2	0	0	0	5	0	118
B2	8705	59505	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	303	0	0
B3	8705	59505	142	23	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B4	8705	59505	0	0	0	23	0	0	0	0	4	0	88
B5	8705	59505	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B11	8715	59515	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	534
B12	8715	59515	21	218	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	29
B13	8715	59515	0	0	0	0	1	19	0	0	7	0	263
B14	8715	59515	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	122
B15	8715	59515	0	40	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
B21	8725	59525	0	0	0	8	1	0	0	0	54	0	863
B22	8725	59525	67	251	0	61	1	0	0	0	13	0	503

Grid sq	E	N	RB cbm wt (g)	Poss RB bldg mat. wt (g)	RB pot wt (g)	Burnt flint wt (g)	Blades/flakes no	Debitage wt (g)	Prehist pot wt (g)	Frit/slag wt (g)	PM pot wt (g)	Clay pipe no	PM bldg mat wt (g)
B23	8725	59525	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	183
B24	8725	59525	0	216	0	0	0	0	0	0	40	0	109
B25	8725	59525	36	433	0	26	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
B26	8725	59525	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0
B31	8735	59505	29	839	0	7	0	0	0	0	47	0	279
B32	8735	59515	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	229
B33	8735	59525	149	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	275
B34	8735	59535	0	0	0	98	0	0	0	0	6	0	98
B35	8735	59545	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	7	0	0
B36	8735	59555	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
B37	8735	59565	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B41	8745	59505	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	259
B42	8745	59515	0	0	0	118	2	0	0	0	0	0	686
B43	8745	59525	0	0	0	43	0	0	0	0	4	0	869
B44	8745	59535	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	58	0	509
B45	8745	59545	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18
B46	8745	59555	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	67
B47	8745	59565	0	0	0	0	0	58	0	0	0	0	0
B51	8755	59505	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	64	0	357
B52	8755	59515	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	199
B53	8755	59525	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	638
B54	8755	59535	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	0	148
B55	8755	59545	0	593	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	668
B56	8755	59555	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	309
B57	8755	59565	9	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	6	0	26
B58	8755	59575	0	0	0	44	1	0	0	0	0	0	49
B61	8765	59515	4	164	0	177	0	0	0	0	38	0	372

Grid sq	E	N	RB cbm wt (g)	Poss RB bldg mat. wt (g)	RB pot wt (g)	Burnt flint wt (g)	Blades/flakes no	Debitage wt (g)	Prehist pot wt (g)	Frit/slag wt (g)	PM pot wt (g)	Clay pipe no	PM bldg mat wt (g)
B62	8765	59525	0	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B63	8765	59535	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	369
B64	8765	59545	148	0	0	54	0	20	0	0	0	0	134
B65	8765	59555	0	0	0	26	1	0	0	0	0	0	573
B66	8765	59565	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	657
B67	8765	59575	0	0	0	83	0	0	0	0	0	0	231
B68	8765	59585	0	0	0	7	1	0	0	0	0	16	0
B71	8775	59505	1	0	0	243	8	0	0	4	56	0	245
B72	8775	59515	179	2460	0	87	3	87	0	0	0	1	207
B73	8775	59525	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	22	0	0	271
B74	8775	59535	138	631	0	236	1	0	0	0	0	19	825
B75	8775	59545	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B76	8775	59555	0	41	0	41	0	0	0	68	0	0	22
B77	8775	59565	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	49	0	0
B81	8785	59505	343	432	0	67	3	0	0	0	12	0	268
B82	8785	59515	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	110
B83	8785	59525	71	0	34	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	36
B84	8785	59535	434	0	26	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	197
B85	8785	59545	148	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	156
B86	8785	59555	39	1972	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	102
B87	8785	59565	151	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	130
B91	8795	59505	263	826	0	186	6	82	7	0	0	0	188
B92	8795	59515	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	6
B93	8795	59525	545	0	1	25	1	0	0	0	0	7	45
B94	8795	59535	177	0	55	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	245
B95	8795	59545	135	0	0	78	0	0	0	0	0	16	108
B96	8795	59555	241	0	0	19	1	0	0	0	0	0	111

Grid sq	E	N	RB cbm wt (g)	Poss RB bldg mat. wt (g)	RB pot wt (g)	Burnt flint wt (g)	Blades/flakes no	Debitage wt (g)	Prehist pot wt (g)	Frit/slag wt (g)	PM pot wt (g)	Clay pipe no	PM bldg mat wt (g)
C45	8845	59545	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C51	8855	59505	275	0	0	176	4	0	0	0	0	0	137
C52	8855	59515	339	0	0	80	2	0	0	0	0	0	219
C53	8855	59525	504	0	5	297	1	0	0	0	12	0	243
C54	8855	59535	387	0	0	132	0	0	0	0	6	0	17
C55	8855	59545	0	596	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22
C61	8865	59505	517	0	0	342	0	0	0	0	0	0	163
C62	8865	59515	238	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	98
C63	8865	59525	155	0	0	24	1	0	0	0	0	0	16
C64	8865	59535	68	231	0	58	0	0	0	0	0	0	117
C65	8865	59545	13	223	10	73	0	0	0	0	150	0	0
C71	8875	59505	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	461
C72	8875	59515	103	0	0	116	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C73	8875	59525	341	0	31	246	2	2	0	0	2	0	117
C74	8875	59535	344	114	0	0	1	0	0	0	17	0	55
C75	8875	59545	99	0	0	13	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
C81	8885	59505	132	0	7	18	0	0	0	0	15	0	25
C82	8885	59515	250	0	17	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	184
C83	8885	59525	130	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31
C84	8885	59535	96	42	0	0	0	42	0	0	0	0	59
C85	8885	59545	2	0	0	68	1	40	0	0	6	0	63
C91	8885	59555	0	0	0	45	0	0	0	0	0	0	361
C92	8895	59505	943	0	0	188	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C93	8895	59515	313	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	110
C94	8895	59525	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
C95	8895	59535	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	46
F51	8755	59405	34	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	153

Grid sq	E	N	RB cbm wt (g)	Poss RB bldg mat. wt (g)	RB pot wt (g)	Burnt flint wt (g)	Blades/flakes no	Debitage wt (g)	Prehist pot wt (g)	Frit/slag wt (g)	PM pot wt (g)	Clay pipe no	PM bldg mat wt (g)
F52	8755	59415	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	178
F53	8755	59425	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	379	0	0
F54	8755	59435	0	242	0	318	1	0	0	0	4	0	223
F55	8755	59445	0	165	0	164	0	0	0	0	19	0	351
F56	8755	59455	0	345	0	82	1	0	0	0	0	0	20
F57	8755	59465	0	162	15	35	0	0	0	0	0	1	452
F58	8755	59475	0	738	0	153	0	0	0	21	1	1	319
F59	8755	59485	0	0	0	56	0	15	0	0	0	0	96
F60	8755	59495	0	772	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17
F61	8765	59405	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	58
F62	8765	59415	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	107
F63	8765	59425	0	1064	0	40	4	0	0	0	51	0	641
F64	8765	59435	0	435	0	51	1	52	0	0	6	0	246
F65	8765	59445	644	1154	0	62	1	0	0	0	16	0	298
F66	8765	59455	0	441	0	153	0	0	0	0	4	0	200
F67	8765	59465	0	0	0	127	1	0	0	0	0	1	204
F68	8765	59475	0	198	0	0	1	0	0	0	6	0	53
F69	8765	59485	0	295	0	0	1	0	0	0	106	0	77
F70	8765	59495	0	439	0	0	0	89	0	0	0	0	89
F71	8775	59405	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	0	0
F72	8775	59415	0	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	133
F73	8775	59425	0	109	0	29	3	0	0	0	0	0	193
F74	8775	59435	0	0	0	60	6	133	0	0	52	0	241
F75	8775	59445	0	190	0	25	2	94	0	0	4	0	152
F76	8775	59455	0	0	0	29	1	0	0	0	0	0	146
F77	8775	59465	0	0	0	137	0	13	0	0	0	0	219
F78	8775	59475	0	0	0	71	0	23	0	0	0	0	121

Grid sq	E	N	RB cbm wt (g)	Poss RB bldg mat. wt (g)	RB pot wt (g)	Burnt flint wt (g)	Blades/flakes no	Debitage wt (g)	Prehist pot wt (g)	Frit/slag wt (g)	PM pot wt (g)	Clay pipe no	PM bldg mat wt (g)
G6	8805	59455	0	30	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	84
G7	8805	59465	43	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	250
G8	8805	59475	95	124	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	220
G9	8805	59485	76	164	0	18	2	0	0	0	1	0	208
G10	8805	59495	0	161	0	191	4	0	0	0	0	0	349
G11	8815	59405	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	131
G12	8815	59415	198	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	307
G13	8815	59425	0	183	0	10	0	0	0	0	3	0	168
G14	8815	59435	61	777	0	0	0	4	0	0	4	0	354
G15	8815	59445	286	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	517
G16	8815	59455	98	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	369
G17	8815	59465	0	393	0	77	2	17	0	0	70	0	163
G18	8815	59475	47	69	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
G19	8815	59485	99	581	0	60	0	43	0	0	0	0	34
G20	8815	59495	69	0	0	129	4	0	0	0	13	0	103
G21	8825	59405	0	0	7	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	165
G22	8825	59415	11	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	94
G23	8825	59425	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	0	0
G24	8825	59435	52	55	0	21	3	0	0	0	0	0	85
G25	8825	59445	0	325	0	24	2	0	0	0	9	0	22
G26	8825	59455	0	84	0	12	2	0	0	0	0	0	287
G27	8825	59465	0	0	0	214	0	5	0	0	17	0	173
G28	8825	59475	116	0	0	92	4	0	0	0	0	0	203
G29	8825	59485	73	1095	0	35	0	29	0	0	0	0	74
G30	8825	59495	0	0	0	178	1	54	0	0	0	0	172
G31	8835	59405	113	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	133
G32	8835	59415	0	532	12	0	0	0	0	0	21	0	109

Grid sq	E	N	RB cbm wt (g)	Poss RB bldg mat. wt (g)	RB pot wt (g)	Burnt flint wt (g)	Blades/flakes no	Debitage wt (g)	Prehist pot wt (g)	Frit/slag wt (g)	PM pot wt (g)	Clay pipe no	PM bldg mat wt (g)
G33	8835	59425	177	198	0	10	1	0	0	0	0	0	112
G34	8835	59435	0	342	0	62	0	0	0	0	6	0	216
G35	8835	59445	0	85	0	46	0	0	0	0	0	0	240
G36	8835	59455	0	279	0	104	1	0	0	0	4	0	167
G37	8835	59465	18	0	0	4	0	11	0	0	0	0	217
G38	8835	59475	10	141	45	258	3	0	0	0	5	0	558
G39	8835	59485	349	789	0	211	1	0	0	0	0	0	460
G40	8835	59495	124	0	0	157	4	23	0	0	0	0	368
G41	8845	59405	0	98	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18
G42	8845	59415	0	170	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0
G43	8845	59425	27	941	14	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	435
G44	8845	59435	173	39	11	62	0	0	0	0	0	0	142
G45	8845	59445	84	0	0	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	119
G46	8845	59455	0	0	5	57	0	0	0	0	16	0	498
G47	8845	59465	186	39	2	78	0	0	0	0	16	0	336
G48	8845	59475	0	15	9	28	1	0	0	0	19	0	272
G49	8845	59485	34	0	0	209	3	0	0	0	0	0	55
G50	8845	59495	165	0	9	204	0	0	0	0	0	0	25
G51	8855	59405	31	0	9	97	0	29	0	0	1	0	83
G52	8855	59415	31	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	45	0	21
G53	8855	59425	73	426	0	0	0	0	0	38	0	0	192
G54	8855	59435	0	0	0	65	1	0	0	0	2	0	203
G55	8855	59445	39	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19
G56	8855	59455	0	503	0	139	2	0	0	0	0	0	461
G57	8855	59465	135	704	4	85	1	0	0	0	0	0	957
G58	8855	59475	0	124	16	134	0	0	0	0	26	0	214
G59	8855	59485	22	0	0	44	2	3	0	0	0	0	288

Grid sq	E	N	RB cbm wt (g)	Poss RB bldg mat. wt (g)	RB pot wt (g)	Burnt flint wt (g)	Blades/flakes no	Debitage wt (g)	Prehist pot wt (g)	Frit/slag wt (g)	PM pot wt (g)	Clay pipe no	PM bldg mat wt (g)
G88	8885	59475	0	1320	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	188
G89	8885	59485	0	281	0	44	1	0	0	0	0	0	256
G90	8885	59495	0	420	3	105	1	105	0	0	0	0	47
K87	8885	59365	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	64
K88	8885	59375	0	117	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	0	339
K89	8885	59385	0	2612	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	794
K90	8885	59395	0	502	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	507
K97	8795	59365	0	52	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	70
K98	8795	59375	0	73	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	0	104
K99	8795	59385	0	0	0	0	2	11	0	0	0	0	234
K100	8795	59395	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	71	18	0	529

Individual finds

Grid sq		No	Wt (g)
B67	Possible opus signinum	1	5
C2	Worked stone (granite ?)	1	109
C3	Green-glazed medieval? Pot sherd	1	5
C13	Worked stone (granite ?)	1	18
C22	Worked stone (granite ?)	1	22
C22	Oyster shell	1	
C63	Box-flue tile frag	1	84
F64	Side scraper	1	
F65	Pilae tile frag	1	644
F70	Roman coin (centenionalis of Magnentius)	1	(returned to Mr and Mrs Pennington)
G39	Medieval greyware sherd	1	10
G60	Box-flue tile frag	1	42
G68	Flint end scraper	1	
G90	BA barbed-and-tanged arrowhead	1	