

Field-Walk At Scabes Castle

Scabes Castle is an area of open Downland approx. 5 miles N~J of Brighton and 1 mile SW of Devil's Dyke. (see fig 1)

Grid Ref. (The start of line A see Fig.1): TQ 2533 0942

Date walked: 6/11/1983

Method: Line -lines 3m apart with sections 30m long. Material picked up 1m on either side of the line - 'Leap-frog' method.

Situation & geology: SE-facing slope of a short S-facing spur of Fulking Hill. Upper chalk - coombe deposits in the dry valley bottom.

State of field: Field had been rolled and crops were beginning to grow - nevertheless the surface finds were well exposed.

Area covered: 68,000sq.m.

Farmer & farm: Mr.E.Leppard, New Barn Farm (TQ 256 077)

Aim of field-walk: To discover what still may be found in an area known from early records to have Roman remains.

Description of Finds

Finds consisted of worked flint, burnt flint, Iron Age (I.A.), Romano-British (R.B.) and 'Modern' potsherds, tile, brick, sandstone, ironstone & quartzite fragments, glass, metal frags., shell frags., teeth, beach pebbles, slate, coal, slag, coke?, shale? and concrete.

The distributions of the finds are shown in Tables 2-4 and the total quantities in Table 5.

Several of these groups of artifacts share a similar area of concentration in the NW of the field. These are the burnt flint, I.A. and R.B. potsherds, Roman tile, sandstone (etc.), oysters and possibly beach pebbles.

In contrast the worked flint, modern pottery, modern tile and brick, glass, metal fragments and slate are scattered fairly evenly over the area walked. Other finds are found in quantities too small for their distributions to be of much significance.

Fig. 1

Location of
the site

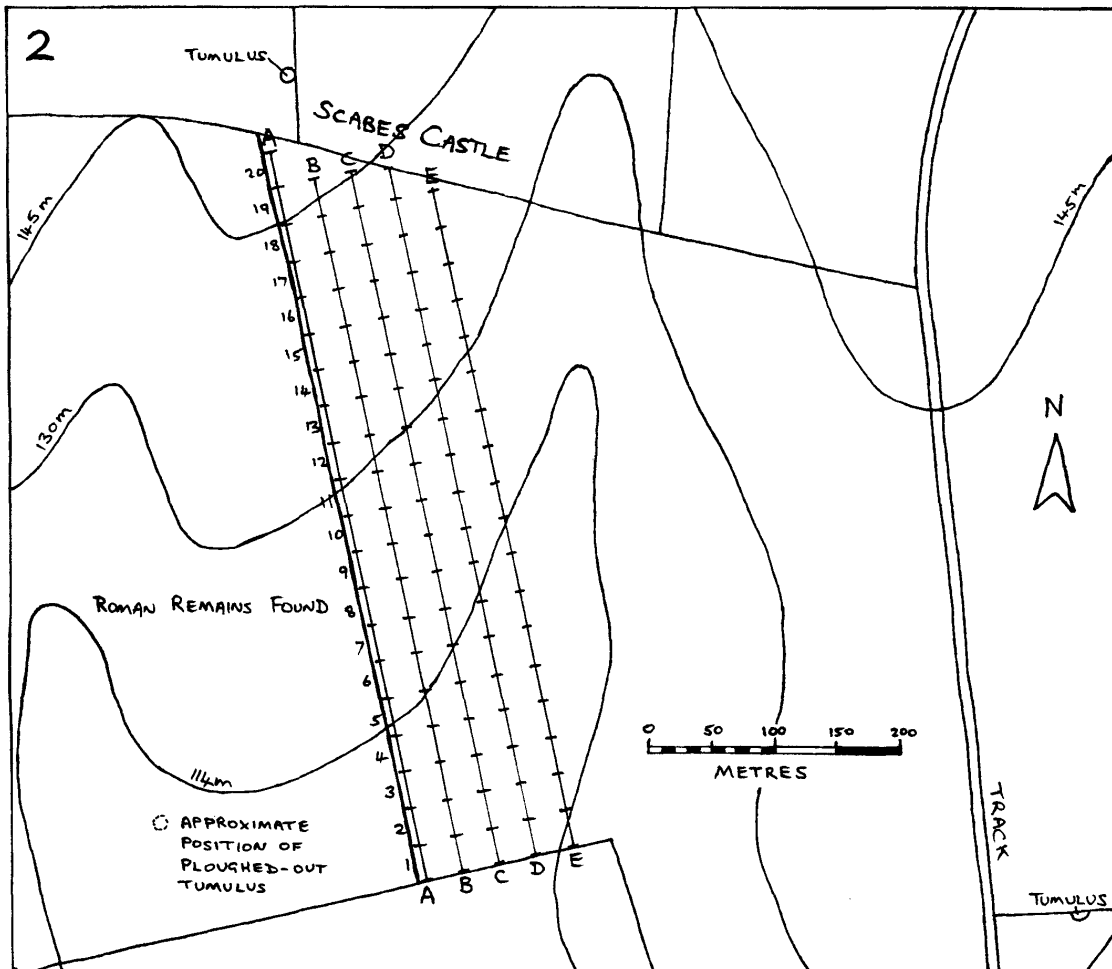
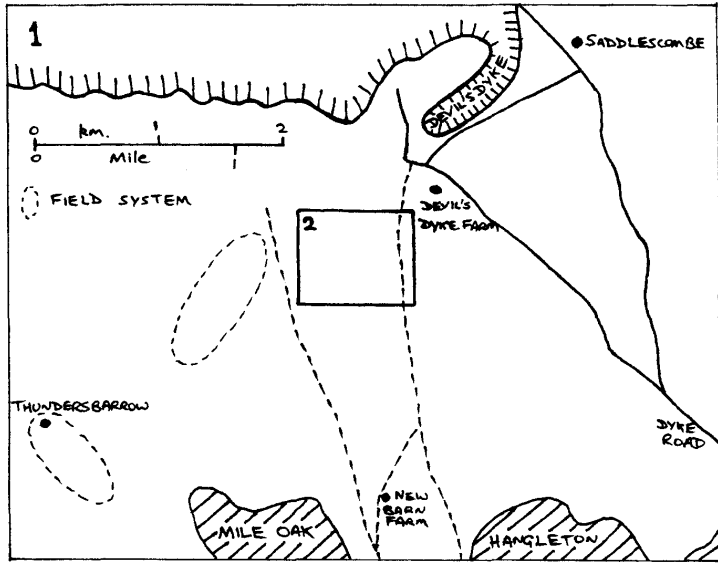


Table 2 : Distribution of worked flints and burnt flint

Section	<u>Waste flakes</u>					<u>Implements</u>					<u>Burnt flint</u>					Section
	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E	
20	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	20
19	1	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	27	13	-	-	19
18			2			1						64	22	1	8	18
17		1									23	2	21	5	5	17
16	1			9	1		1	3			1	18	4	11	5	16
15		1				1					17	1	1	1		15
14	6	1		1					2		21	14		2		14
13			1								137				1	13
12	4	3		1	2	2		2			33	4	8		9	12
11	9	1		1	1	3	1	2	1	1	101	2	2	10	2	11
10	3	2				2					37	1	11			10
9				5				1			15	6	7	1		9
8			3	5				2				4	1		2	8
7	1	7		3	5		2	1		5	2	10		15	15	7
6	3			1								1	6		1	6
5	3	1			2	12		1	1	1				1	4	5
4												9			1	4
3		2	5			1	1				2	22				3
2	1		1	1	3	1	2				1			5		2
1	2	1		1	1						1				2	1

Worked flint

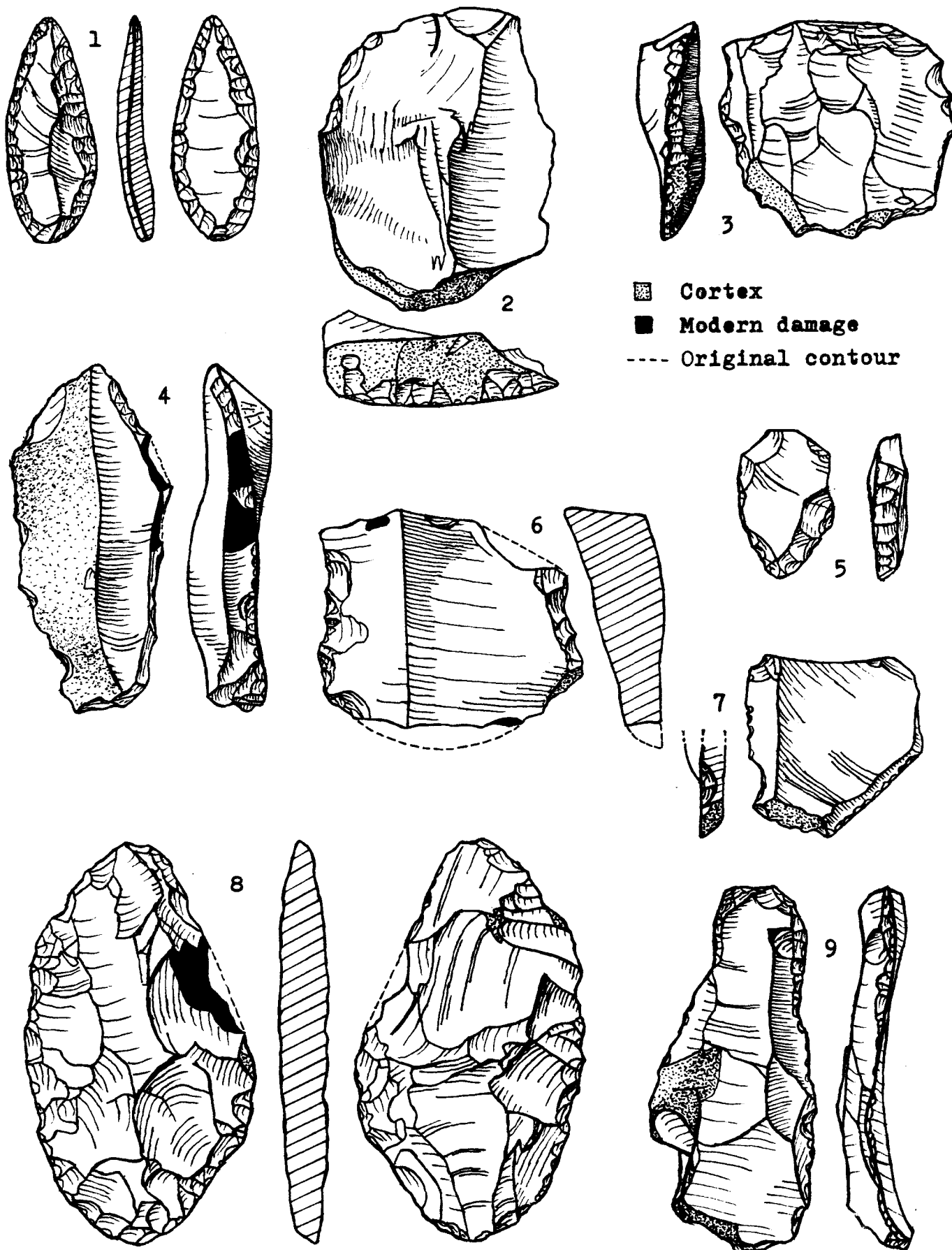
A moderate quantity of struck flakes were found (see Table 2). The flints have presumably lain on the surface for a long time since many have abraded edges. A relatively high proportion of the flakes are implements (1 in 4.1). Several of these implements appear to be composite, combining two of the usual tool types on a single support.

Table 1 : Tool types

Leaf—shaped arrowhead	1	(Fig.2 no.1)
End scraper	1	(Fig.2 no.2)
End s. with end broken in antiquity	1	(Fig.2 no.6)
Oval s. with all round irregular retouch	2	(Fig.2 no.3)
Side scraper	2	(Fig.2 no.4)
Small oval scraper	1	(Fig.2 no.5)
Combined end and side scraper	2	
Hollow scraper	1	
Combined side and hollow scraper	1	
Notched piece	1	
Double notched piece	1	
Combined notch and side scraper	1	(Fig.2 no.7)
Combined notch and retouch	2	
Leaf—shaped projectile or flaked knife	1	(Fig.2 no.8)
Retouched flake	15	
Retouched blade	3	(Fig.2 no.9)
Flake with trace of wear polish	1	
'Core piece'	1	
Total	38	

Fig. 2 Flint Implements

Scale $\frac{1}{1}$



The bifacially-flaked, leaf shaped implement (Fig.2 No.8) is reminiscent of a Neolithic laurel-leaf¹ — the flaking technique is cruder than is usual with Bronze Age implements. It is unlikely that the flints are all of Neolithic age since a thumb—nail scraper was found 500m west of the area walked and three round barrows are in the vicinity (see Fig.1).

Just one flint core was found, a hammerstone, that was accidentally discarded with the burnt flint.

Pottery

Iron age (LA.)(see Table 3)

The sherds are generally medium to fine sandy wares containing varying amounts of medium/fine calcined flint. Some sherds have quartz, ironstone and possibly chalk inclusions. The colour of both surfaces and interiors range from orange/buff through brown to dark grey.

Romano-British (R.B.)(see Table 3)

The pottery has been classified into the following groups –

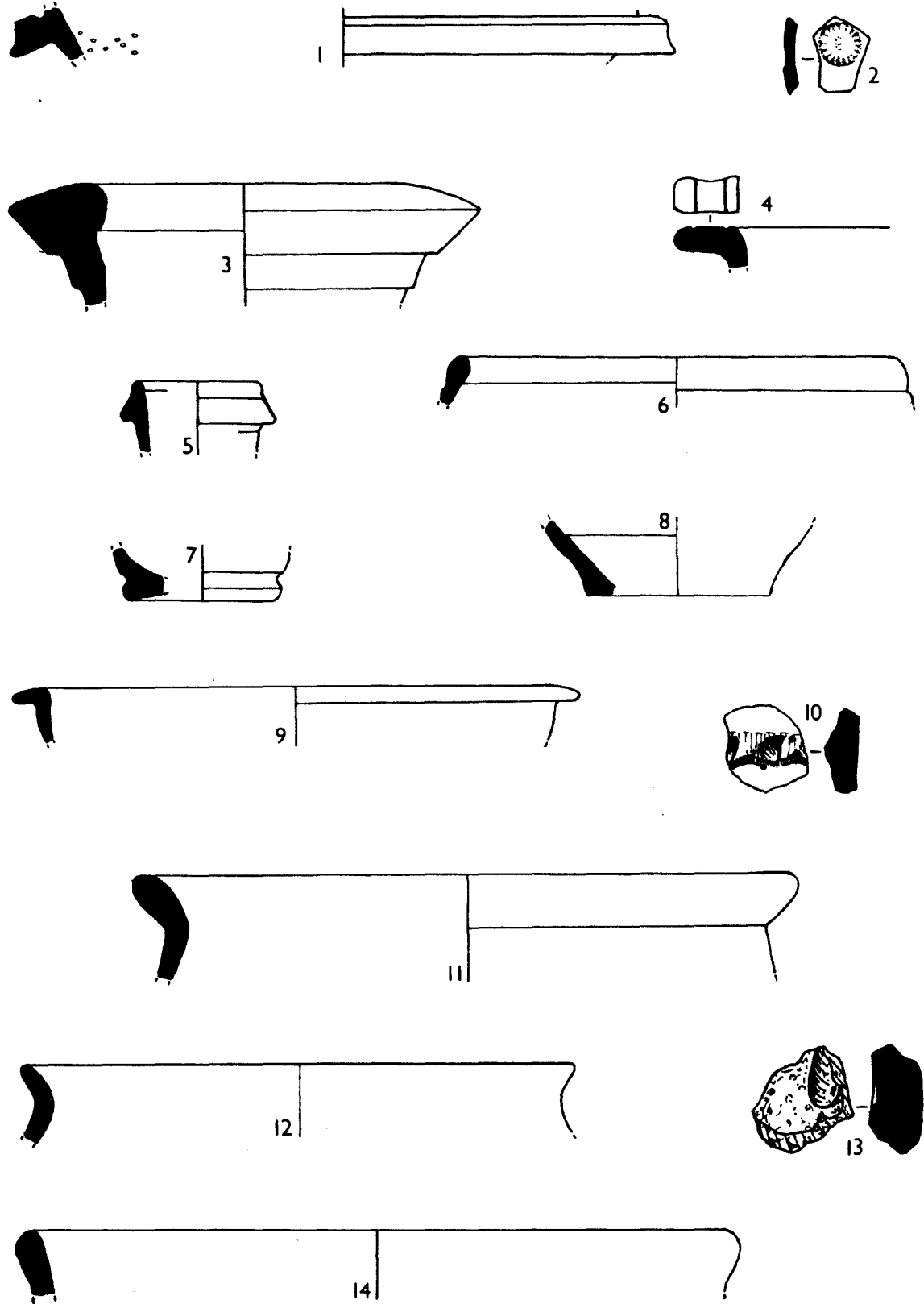
Type	Vessel types	No. of sherds	% by No.	Wt. of sherds/g	% by wt.
i) Samian	Bowls(?)	9	1.8	15	0.4
ii) Dressel 20(?)	Amphora	1	0.2	105	3.0
iii) Oxford	Nortaria, bowls	22	4.4	125	3.6
iv) White/pale buff fine sandy wares	Bowls	'	1.2	50	1.4
v) Grey/buff/orange medium sandy ware	Jars, bowls, beaker & flagon	112	22.6	865	25.0
vi) East Sussex ware	Jars, bowls	32?	66.1	2120	61.3
vii) Thundersbarrow ware	Storage jars	7	1.k	125	3.6
viii) Miscellaneous	—	11	2.2	55	1.6
		495		3460g	

1 J.G.D.Clark et al. Excavations at the Neolithic site at Hurst Fen, Mildenhall, Suffolk P.P.S. vol.26 (1960) p.221

Table 3 : Distribution of Iron Age, Romano-British and 'Modern' pottery

Section	<u>Iron Age</u>					<u>Romano-British</u>					<u>'Modern'</u>					Section
	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E	
20						1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
19						5	-	11	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
18			1			7	30	5		1				1	1	
17		2		2		4	18	11	12					2	4	
16		3	1			11	26	24	4					1	2	
15			1		1	18	11	18	14					1		
14		2	3			44	85	7	3					2		
13			2				44		5							2
12				1			10	3								
11	1			1		1			1					2		
10		1	1			3	5	4		2			2			
9							6	3		1			3			
8			1			1	4	1					1	1		
7						1	1	2		1						
6							1	1								
5						2	1	1								1
4							1	1								1
3						1		2								
2	1					2			1					2		1
1	1												1	1		1

Fig. 3 Romano-British pottery Scale $\frac{1}{2}$



Representative sherds of each group (except samian and miscellaneous) are illustrated in Fig. 3.

Type	Illustration No.	Description
ii) Dressel 20 (?)	3	Rim of amphora in a hard, fine, buff, sandy fabric with mica flake and quartz inclusions. cf. Bishopstone 1977. ¹
iii) Oxford	1	Flanged mortarium. Fine micaceous fabric with buff surface and light grey core. Angular quartz grit on inner surface. 4th.C form. cf. Bishopstone 1977. M.Bell SAC 115 p.168 No.98
	2	Body sherd with impressed rosette. Fine micaceous orange fabric.
iv) White/pale buff fine sandy ware	6	Rim of bowl with pale buff surface, orange core and light grey central core.
	9	Rim of bowl in a pale buff fabric with quartz and grog inclusions.
v) Grey/buff/orange medium sandy ware	4	Rim of bowl with incised lines on rim. Orange fabric.
	5	Flagon rim. Light grey fabric.
	7	Base or beaker. Light grey, rather fine sandy fabric.
	8	Base of jar. Orange fabric with medium ironstone (?) inclusions.
	11	Rim of jar. Orange fabric with grayish slip.
vi) East Sussex ware	10	'Soapy', dull orange, grog-tempered body, sherd with thumb-impressed cordon.
	12	Rim of jar. 'Soapy', orange, grog-tempered.
	14	Rim of jar. Light grey, grog-tempered.
vii) Thundersbarrow ware	13	Storage jar-body sherd with finger dab. Brown/grey fabric with many large grog and chalk inclusions.cf. Thunders-barrow 1933.Ant.J.vol.13(1933)p.134—51

1 M Bell SAC 115 p.161 No. 14

Most sherds are considerably abraded - only one of the Oxford sherds retains traces of it's original orange colour coating.

The pottery dates from possibly the 2nd. and 3rd C. in the case of the samian wares to the late 4th.C. The flanged Oxford mortarium is of typical 4th.C. form. East Sussex wares date between the late 1st. and late 4th.C.

Medieval

Two sandy sherds were found in sections A19 and Bib

'Modern' (see Table 3)

These included sherds or brown glazed earthenware, stoneware, flowerpots, and some porcelain.

Foreign stones and pebbles (see Table 4)

Thirteen of the twenty-five pieces of sandstone and quartzite found had flat surfaces due to alteration by man. These included quern fragments and two broken whetstones of rectangular cross-section. At least seven distinct types of sandstone and quartzite could be distinguished. One piece of ironstone (B5) and one small piece of shale? (E7) were also found. The pebbles were mainly of flint but one larger, broken piece was of quartzite.

Shells

Six of the nine oyster and two of the four scallop fragments recovered were found in the areas where the Roman remains are concentrated (see discussion).

Animal remains

Two fragmentary sheep's teeth were found in section C1~

Glass

One small fragment of thin pale green glass containing a few small air bubbles was found in section C19. This may well be of Roman date.

45 pieces of modern glass were also recovered. It was thought unnecessary to prepare a separate distribution table for these finds - there was no distinct concentration.

Table 4 : Distribution of tile, brick and foreign stone

Section	<u>Roman tile & daub? (□)</u>					<u>Modern brick and tile</u>					<u>Sandstone & other foreign stone, & pebbles (□)</u>					Section	
	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E		
20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20
19	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	19
18	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	3	-	1	-	-	18
17	1	5	6	1	1	2	4	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	-	-	17
16	1	6	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	-	-	16
15	1	7	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	-	-	15
14	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	14
13	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	13
12	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	12
11	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	11
10	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	10
9	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	9
8	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	8
7	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	7
6	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	6
5	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	5
4	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	4
3	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	3
2	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	-	-	2
1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	1

Table 5 Summary of finds

	Type		No
Flint	Flakes	118	156
	Tools and retouched	38	
	Burnt flint		785
Pottery	Iron Age		33
	Romano-British		495
	Medieval		2
	Modern		51
Brick & tile etc.	Romano-British		33
	Daub?		1
	Modern		37
Foreign store	Sandstone Unaltered	12	25
	& quartzite .Smoothed areas	13	
	Ironstone		1
	Shale?		1
	pebbles;		10
& pebbles			
Shells	Oyster Scallop		9
			4
Animal remains	Sheep's teeth		2
Glass	Romano-British ?		1
	Modern		45
Metal & Slag	'Iron'		111
	Aluminum		1
	Slag		4
Others	Slate		13
	Coal		3
	Concrete		2
	Coke		8

Metal and slag

As with the glass no distribution table was drawn up. 111 fragments of 'iron' were found and one of aluminum. Included were 2nd. World War shell fragments and the majority of pieces were certainly of a modern date. There was no distinct concentration.

Four pieces of iron slag were found in sections A19, B5, B13 and CI9.

Others

Small quantities of slate, coal, concrete and coke were recovered.

Discussion

Worked flints were not found in sufficient quantity or in a sufficiently localised area (see Table 2) to suggest the presence of a settlement. The proportion of tools to worked flints (1 to 4.1), however, is large and an investigation of the surrounding areas may perhaps prove productive.

Too much significance cannot be placed on the quantities of finds in individual sections due to the inexperience of many of the volunteers. Even so, the distributions of burnt flint, Iron Age pottery, Romano-British pottery, Roman tile, sandstone (and quartzite) and possibly oysters all indicated similar areas of highest concentration approximately between section 11 and 19 in lines A,B and C (see tables 2,3 and 4). The association of these materials together strongly suggests the presence of a settlement site in the near vicinity.

It is also interesting, considering the amount of ploughing this field has received, that it is still possible to detect these concentrations.

It is not possible, from the limited evidence, to say much about the dating of this settlement - its age may range between the late 1st. and late 4th. C. A.D. (Not saying a lot!) The Iron Age sherds appear to be associated with the Roman remains (see Table 3) but this evidence is too slight to assume that the settlement is also of an Iron Age date.

Roman remains have been recorded in the vicinity of TQ 252 096 (see Fig.1) but no information is recorded. Approximately 1/2 mile west of this area in an adjacent valley (approx. TQ 245 095) is an I.A./B.B. field system and an encampment described by Holleyman as a La Tene III - R.B. village site, though there was no evidence to support the Iron Age claim.(1932). Winbolt notes that Roman vessels (New Forest, Sarnian and grey ware) were found before 1883 on land adjoining Adder Lane - approx. 3/4 mile SW of Devil's Dyke.

The more significant finds have been stored in Brighton Museum (code Sc 83).

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr.A.Woodcock for his help in identifying some of the flintwork and stone artifacts. I am also indebted to Mr.D.Rudling for identifying the R.B.pottery.