

Fieldwalking at Varley Hall and Marquee Brow, Stanmer, Brighton. Introduction

During February and March of 1997 members of the Brighton and Hove Archaeological Society Field Unit conducted a fieldwalking survey of fields at Varley Hall and Marquee Brow, Stanmer, Brighton (Fig 1) . The areas are subject to possible development. The fields have been walked before as part of the archaeological assessment for the Brighton bypass (Hartridge et al 1989) . This project produced no significant archaeological concentrations. The new project was undertaken in view of the Bronze Age settlements found during the excavations at Downsvue (Rudling forthcoming) and Varley Hall (Greig 1997). Further geophysical studies conducted by the Brighton and Hove Archaeological Society at Varley Hall, around the perimeter of the earlier excavations, have produced positive evidence for further round house platforms and other features. Further geophysical studies are planned as part of future projects.

Details of the Fieldwalking

Field 1— North West of Varley Hall TQ33150900

This field is triangular in shape and lies between the two Bronze Age excavated sites of Downsvue and Varley Hall. Aerial photographs of 1975 show the field containing several lynchets and field systems, some of which can still be observed in the field today. The south east quadrant of Field 1 was covered with the top soil removed from the excavations at Varley Hall and this fact is considered in the discussion. This field was walked in 20 metre spaced lines with 20 metre transects.

Field 2- This is an 'L' shaped field that surrounds the Varley Hall of Residence (TQ33250880). It is the area within the 'L' shape that was excavated during the 1995 excavations, the geophysical survey was conducted in the north west section of this field. This field was also walked in lines 20 metres apart with 20 metre transects.

Field 3- The third area is a very small field to the east of fields 1 and 2 (TQ333090) . It is bordered by the Brighton bypass to the east, a public footpath to the west and a line of trees to the south west. Rabbit burrow ejections were also examined in the line of trees and a single end scraper was found. As this was a small field the lines were spaced only 10 metres apart, but the line intervals were maintained at 20 metre spacings.

Marquee Brow -This field is particularly vulnerable to possible development. A datum was set at (TQ33700825) This was the south west corner of the field and in line with the 'Hikers Rest' public House. This field was used for fieldwalking training and several lines were walked in pairs. The lines were spaced 20 metres apart with 20 metre transects. It was noted that the south section of the field contained much contemporary debris, probably deposited from the Moulsecombe estate close by. The weather was predominantly cold but dry when fieldwalking.

The Finds

Flintwork: -

Fieldwalking at Varley Hall and Marquee Brow has produced a quantity of flintwork, the majority (97%) is white patinated material. Additionally there were two pieces with blue/grey patination and a single piece of brown patination. The origin of the latter piece is probably a Wealden location due to the effects of the iron rich deposit. Most of the flakes were hard hammered, with only a small percentage showing any form of retouch.

	VH Field 1	VH Field 2	VH Field 3	Marquee Brow
Flakes	169	51	33	79
Scrapers (End)	6		1	1
Scrapers (Side)	1			
Cores	2		1	
Notched pieces			2	1
Blades	7		1	
Blade Frags.	1	1		5
Piercer	1			
Picks	1		1	
Arrowheads	1			
Totals	340	67	45	202

Cortex flakes	101(60%)	31(61%)	28(84%)	59 (75%)
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Fire-fracture (gram.)	3718	464	409	4590
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Pottery

The sherds of pottery found were very abraded with the majority being of probable Roman date. A few pieces of Prehistoric, with calcined flint temper, were also collected.

Fabrics

- 1) Grog tempered Wares (East Sussex Wares)
- 2) Grey sandy Wares (grey colour with firm/hard sand temper)
- 3) Orange brown sand tempered
- 4) Orange brown sand and grog temper
- 5) Reduced wares flint inclusions 0.5-1.5mm length
- 6) Pink orange/colour coated
- 7) Grey Sandy ware-colour coated
- 8) Pink/orange outer-hard grey inner 0.1% flint inclusions.
- 9) Pink/orange sand temper—(yellow) glaze on inner surface (Oxfordshire ware)

Pottery Analysis:

Fabric	VH Field 1	VH Field 2	VH Field 3	Marquee Brow
1.			1	6
2.				3
3.				6
4.	2			
5.				4
6.				1
7.	1			
8.	1			1
9				1
Post/Med	128	24	23	185

Totals	150	24	24	207
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Clay pipes

	6	2		4
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Marine mollusca

Oyster	18	3	1	21
Scallop				
Whelk		1	1	1

Totals	18	4	2	26
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Small Finds

Fragment of Whetstone material brown ironstone with dressed and squared sides. 50 x 40 x 23/19mm.

Discussion

The lands encompassing Coldean and Stanmer are filled with recorded archaeological sites and isolated finds. The Coldean estate built during the 1950's revealed evidence of Iron Age round houses and Roman ditches. (Yeates 1950). At Wolseley Road a cremation urn of Bronze Age date was also found and another at Saunders Hill. In 1950 the Brighton and Hove Archaeological Society excavated a Bronze Age burial site located along the Ditchling Road close to Old Boat Corner and found a number of cremated burials whilst in the 1989 excavations prior to the construction of the Brighton bypass at Downsview, (Rudling forthcoming) produced evidence for a Bronze Age settlement north of Coldean. A number of barrows are known from the Stanmer area including several in Pudding Bag Wood; one of these barrows lies immediately north of the Downsview excavation. Further excavations in 1993 at Varley Hall (Greig 1997) found new Bronze Age features and some dating from the Iron Age. The Brighton and Hove Archaeological Society conducted a geophysical survey of the land around the Varley Hall excavations, in Field 2 of this

fieldwalking project, and found clear results of two and possibly three round houses cut into the chalk subsoil. Some Bronze Age pottery has recently been found in Wild Park (Druce pers. comm.) at location (TQ32650805) (Fig 6.). An earlier fieldwalking project conducted in 1993 on a field to the east of the Hollingbury hill—fort produced little evidence, other than a disposition of flint flakes, suggesting only prehistoric activity in this area. In the earlier part of this century field systems were preserved to the west of the Hollingbury hill—fort, (Toms 1911), but were subsequently destroyed when the Hollingbury housing estate was developed. However, some lynchets can still be observed to the south east of the Asda superstore(TQ322090). Excavations conducted on sites to both the east and west of the old Patcham Fawcett school (Greatorex forthcoming) revealed Bronze Age round houses and cremation burials, with other features dating to the Roman period.

The fieldwalking at Varley Hall and Marquee Brow was a project conceived to re—examine and re—assess these fields in the light of the knowledge accumulated from data available from more recent fieldwork. A series of dot density diagrams (Figs 2—5) were produced to give an overview of all the fields in relation to each other and to determine concentrations over a wider area. From the density diagrams it can be noted that both Field 1 at Varley Hall and Marquee Brow have areas of flint and fire-fractured flint concentrations. The top soil from the Varley Hall excavations was deposited on Varley Hall field 1, in the south east corner of the field. The flint concentrations shown in figure 2. are more to the west, close to the site at Downsview. The flint material from Marquee Brow contains a number of tools and an arrowhead of Neolithic date (Fig 7.) which may be associated with the clearance of the Downs in this area. Although this part of Stanmer or Coldean is now wooded, documentary evidence (Warne 1989) names the area as ‘Sheep Down’, this infers that at one time in the past it was open downland and that the woods are a recent phenomena. The Neolithic material is concentrated on the lower slopes of the hill at Coldean wood(TQ339086), where after the gales of 1987, the author found other white patinated flint flakes concentrated in a tree root hollow. The flint assemblage, the style of tools and their method of manufacture would tend to suggest later Neolithic to early Bronze Age activity.

There are a wide range of pottery fabrics. The most common examples being those of the locally produced grog-tempered East Sussex ware. Some small quantities of flint tempered material suggest Iron Age or possibly Bronze Age activity, although distinct diagnostic characteristics were lacking from the sherds collected. The majority of pottery collected is of Roman date, with numbers of grey sandy wares among the pieces. The late Roman material included two pieces of Oxfordshire ware, an isolated find of an Oxfordshire ware base (Rudling pers. comm.) was found in 1987 by the author at Marquee Brow at location(TQ33850860) The excavations at Coldean revealed finds of pottery and metalwork dating from prehistoric to the late Roman period (Funnell forthcoming); the pottery from the fieldwalking may be associated with this settlement. The field systems observed on aerial photographs require greater investigation to confirm accurate dating. A Late Iron Age brooch was found in the primary fill of a lynchet base within the field system north-west of Old Boat Corner, destroyed during the Brighton bypass construction (Rudling forthcoming).

The Marquee Brow fieldwalking team found considerable amounts of rubbish and debris—including clay pipes—at the north-east end of Coldean Lane where a number of cottages had been built in the nineteenth century. This collection contained items from both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries for unofficial dumping continues on the site. The most significant observation is the lack of any archaeological material in the proximity of the known house platforms located at Varley Hall during the geophysical survey. This is not

unusual as the majority of Bronze Age pottery from both the Downsview and Varley Hall excavations were found in sealed contexts such as pits or post holes.

The fieldwalking at Varley Hall and Marquee Brow has enhanced the existing archaeological data by emphasising the Neolithic presence at Marquee Brow. The evidence for Prehistoric and Roman use of the field system to the east of Downsview is also shown. The small valley that is Coldean has been settled from Bronze Age times, and its sheltered confines continued in use throughout Iron Age and Roman periods. Indeed this use continues through to the 19th and 20th centuries where a farm, and subsequent housing estate, shelter in the valley. One reason for the attractive location may be a water source; a small stream ran through Coldean Wood until the 1950's (pers. Comm. David West) and this may be the explanation for the continued occupation of this tiny valley.

The most important area for future evaluation would appear to be that between the Varley Hall and Downsview excavations, (Field 1 in this survey). If future geophysical survey and excavation can provide evidence for further Bronze Age settlement in this area then the panorama of the Bronze Age will need to be reconsidered. The fieldwalking at Varley Hall and Marquee Brow endeavoured to find evidence for a linear link running from The Patcham Fawcett school excavations through to Marquee Brow in the north east of Brighton. Whilst fieldwalking confirms activity from the Neolithic through to the late Roman, the archaeological excavations show a high density of human activity throughout the Bronze Age in this whole area. The flint work in Field 1. showed a greater concentration towards the Downsview site than the Varley Hall, but further research needs to be conducted to confirm the link between all the sites.

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John Funnell 6th March 1998

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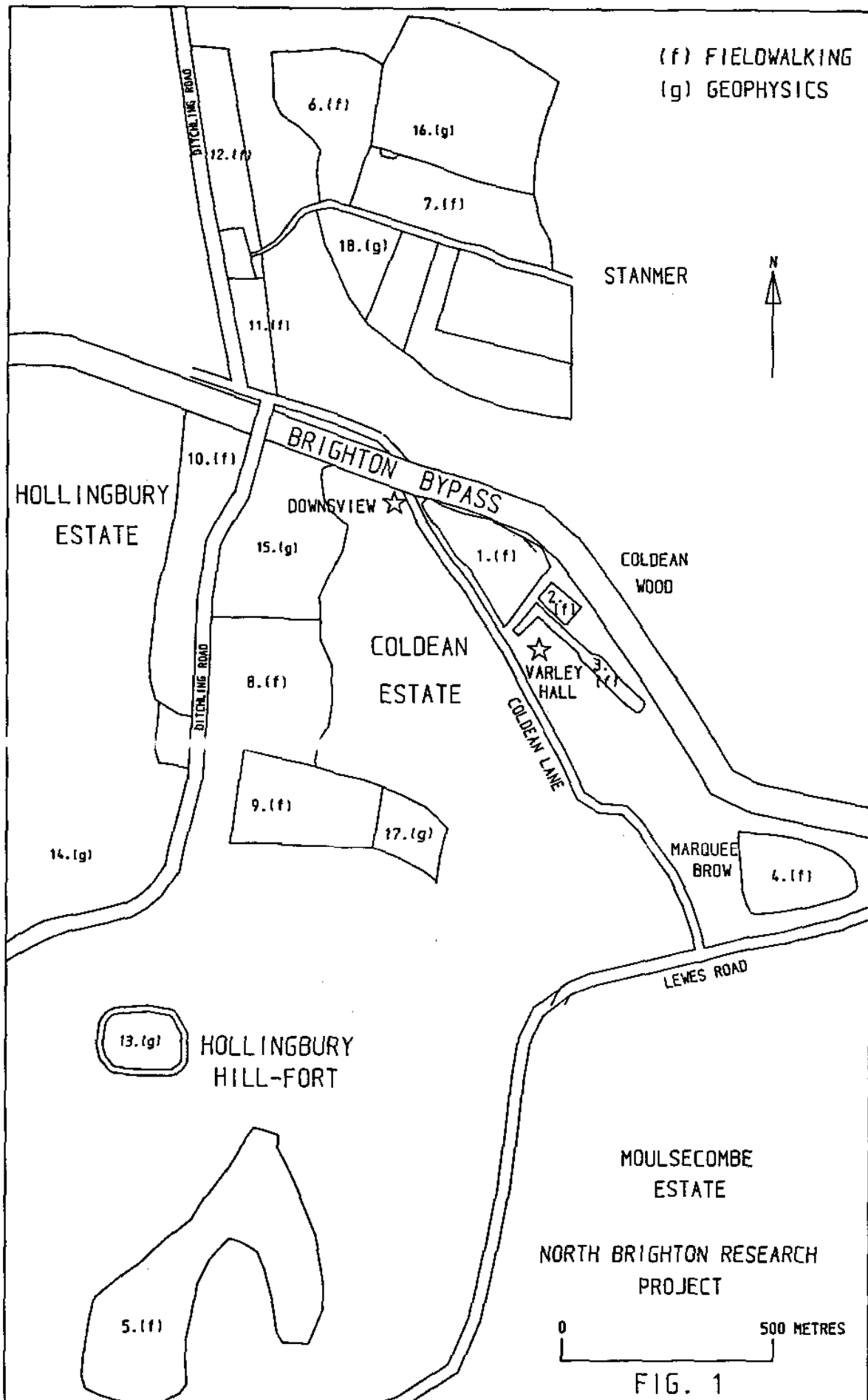
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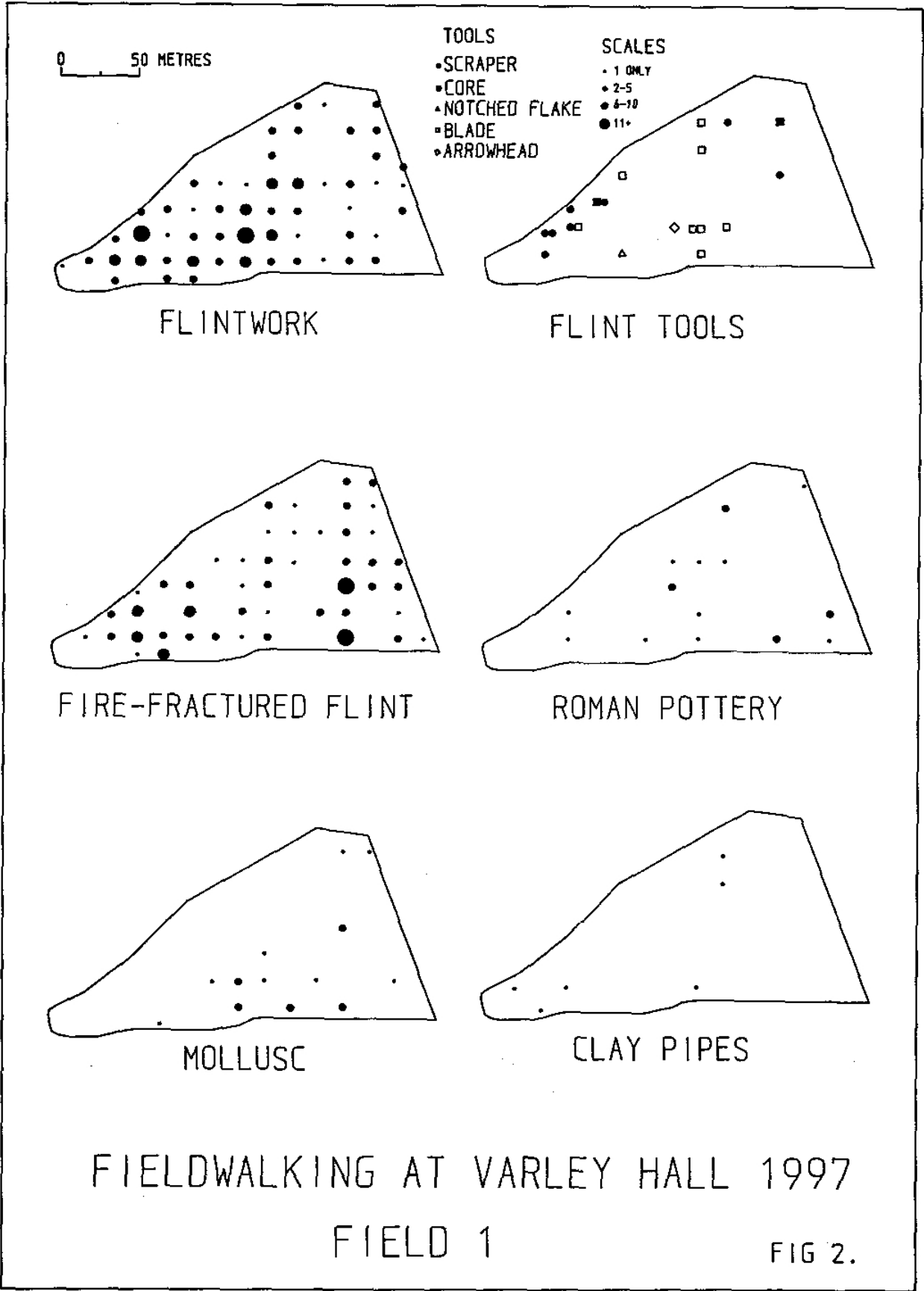
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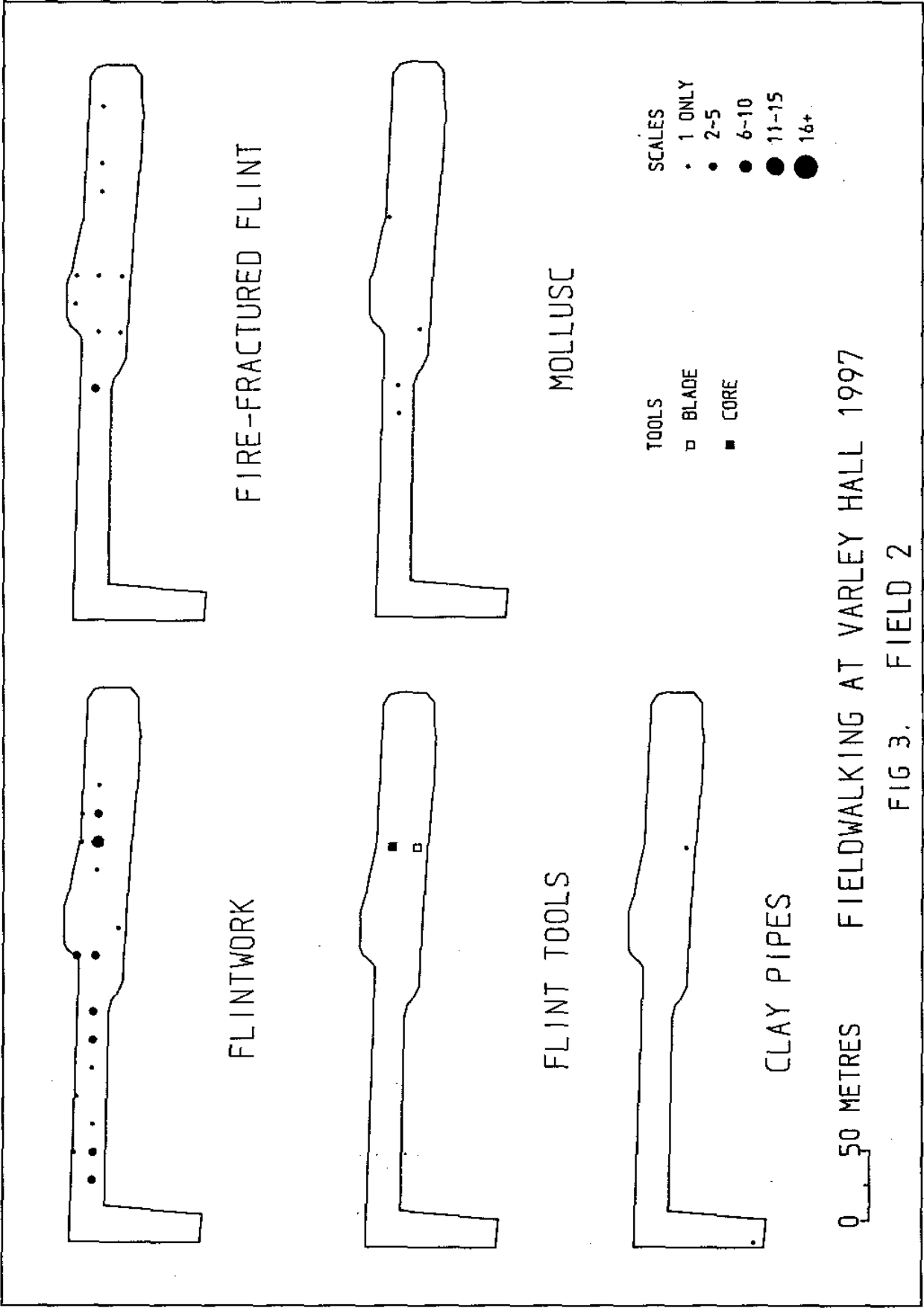
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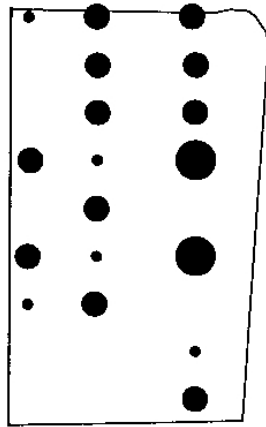
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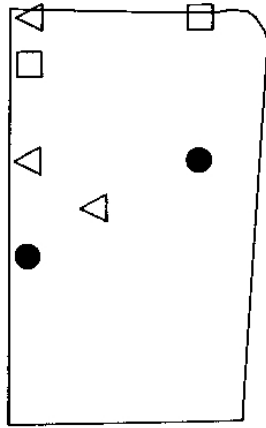




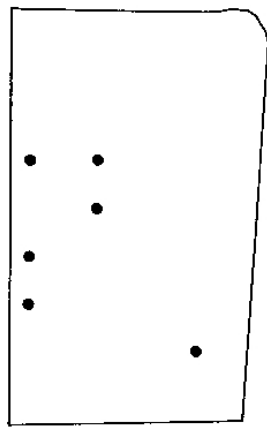




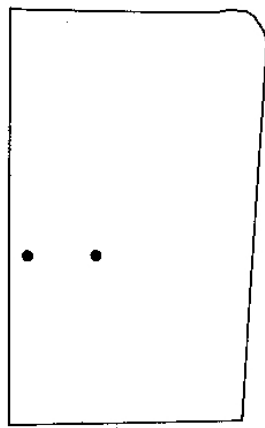
FLINTWORK



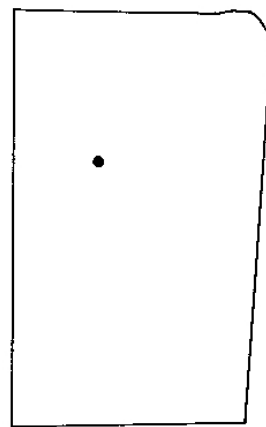
FLINT TOOLS



FIRE-FRACTURED FLINT



ROMAN POTTERY

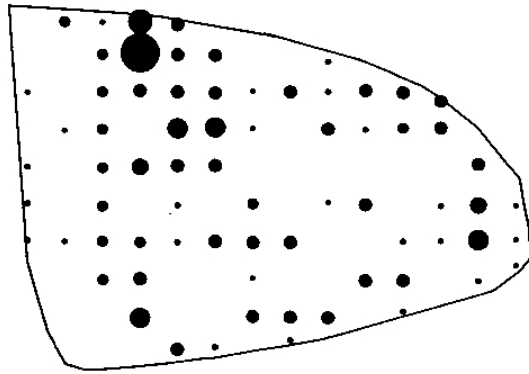


MOLLUSC

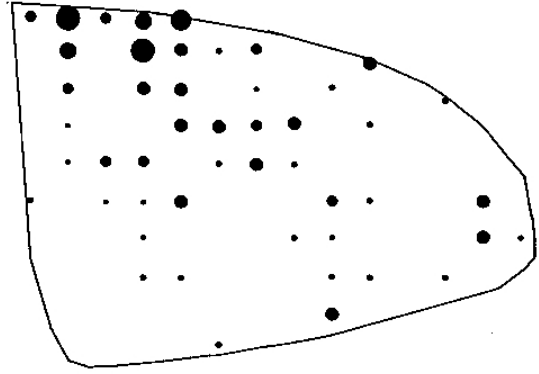
- TOOLS
- SCRAPER
 - △ NOTCHED FLAKE
 - BLADE
- SCALES
- 1 ONLY
 - 2-5
 - 6-10
 - 11-15

0 50 METRES

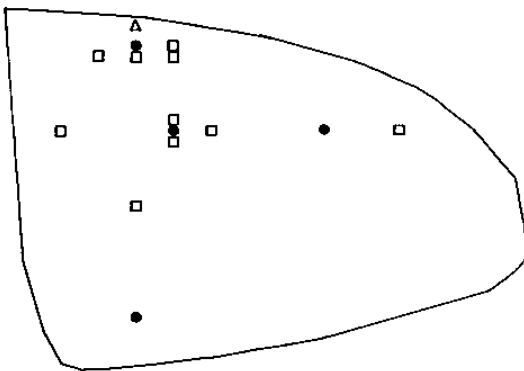
VARLEY HALL-FIELD 3 FIG 4.



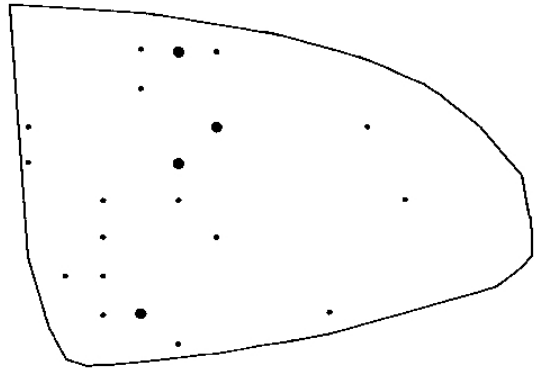
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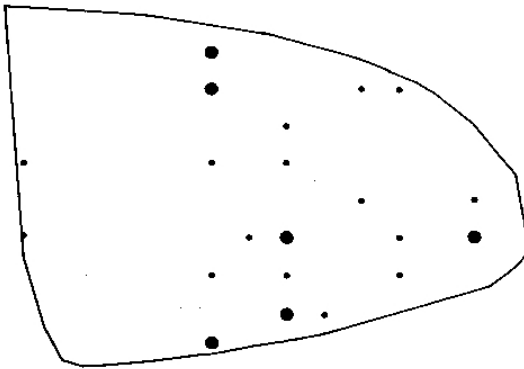
FIRE-FRACTURED FLINT



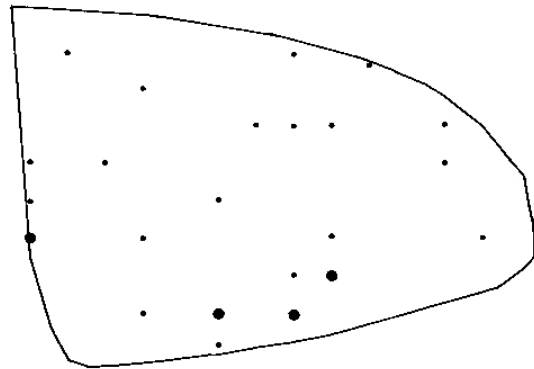
FLINT TOOLS



ROMAN/PREHISTORIC POTTERY



CLAY PIPES



MOLLUSC

TOOLS

- BLADE
- SCRAPER
- △ NOTCHED FLAKE

0 50 METRES

SCALES

- 1 ONLY
- 2-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16+

FIELDWALKING MARQUEE BROW 1997

FIG 5.

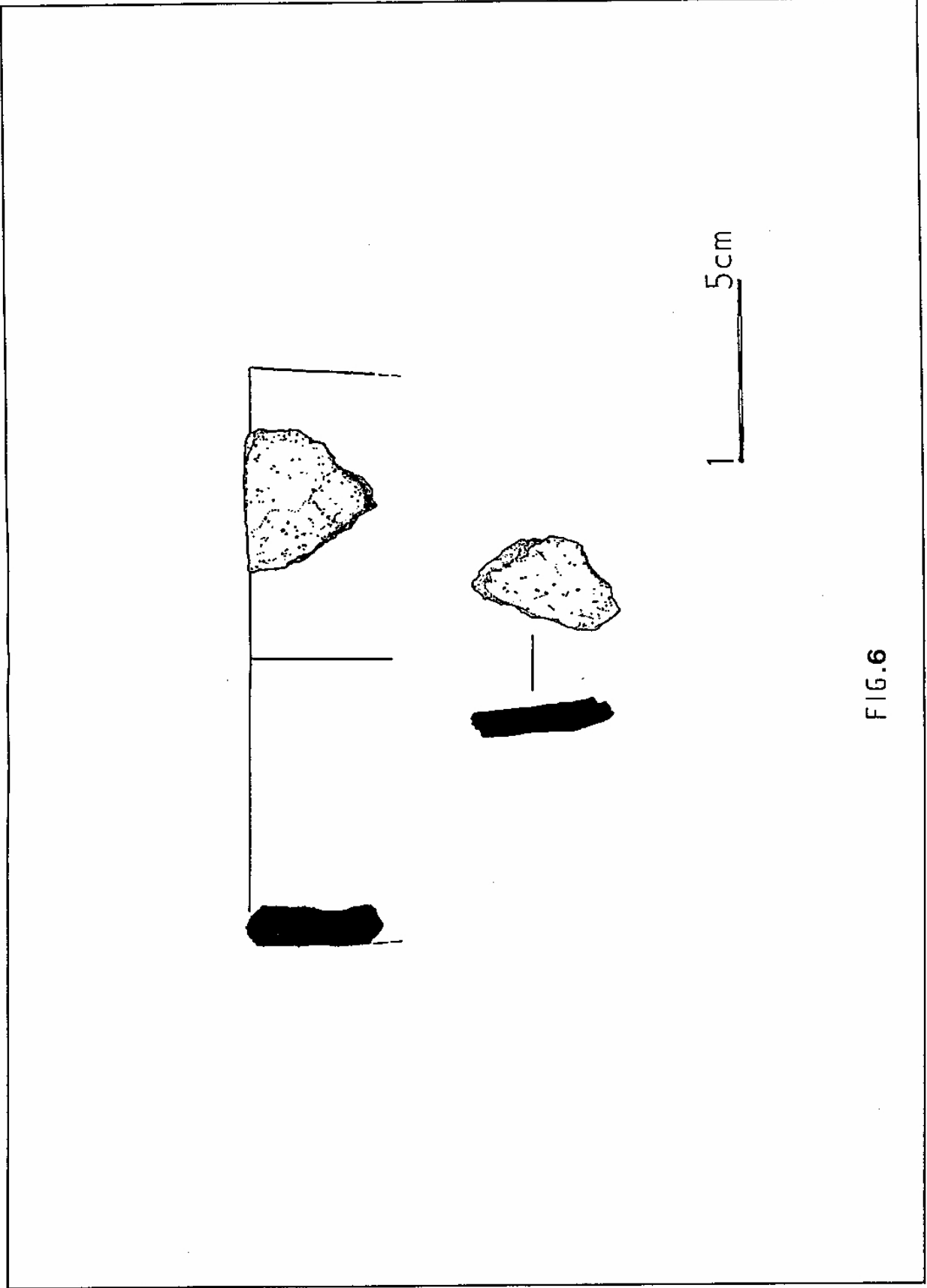


FIG. 6

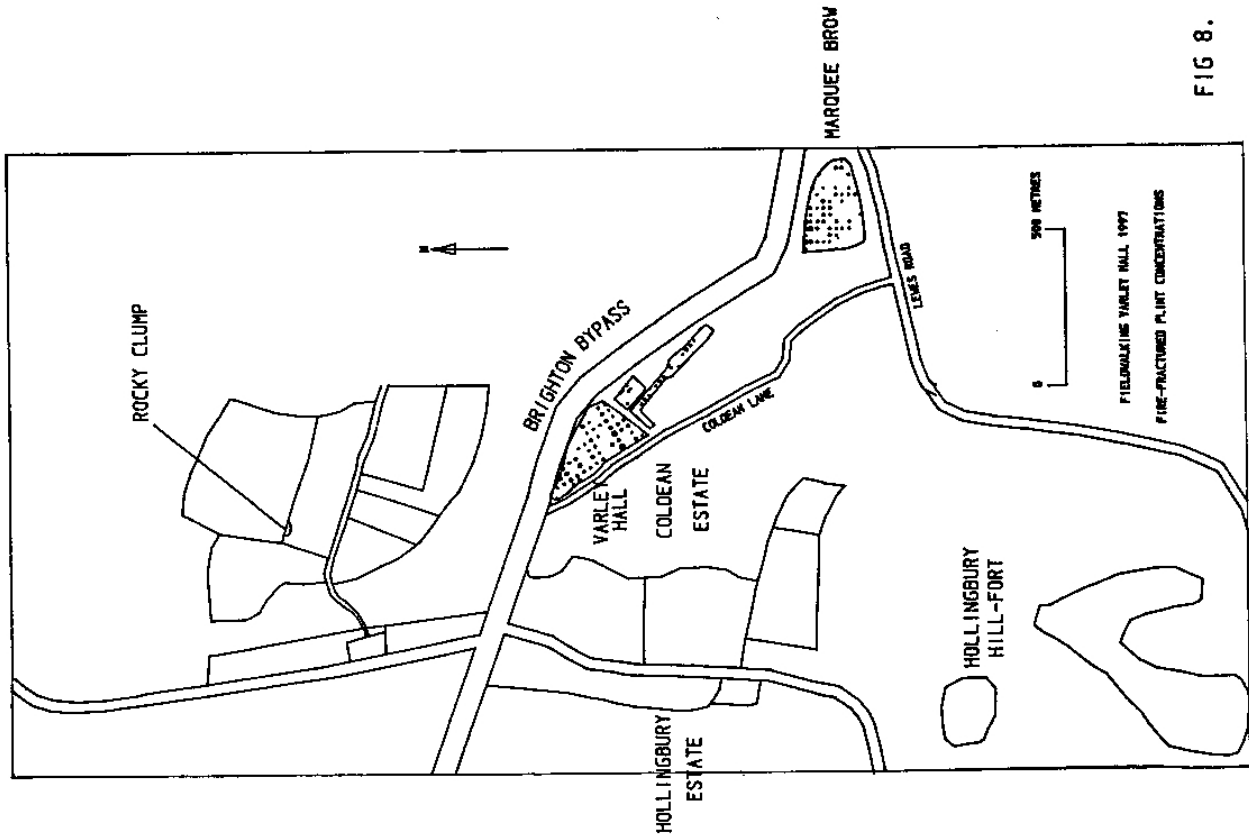
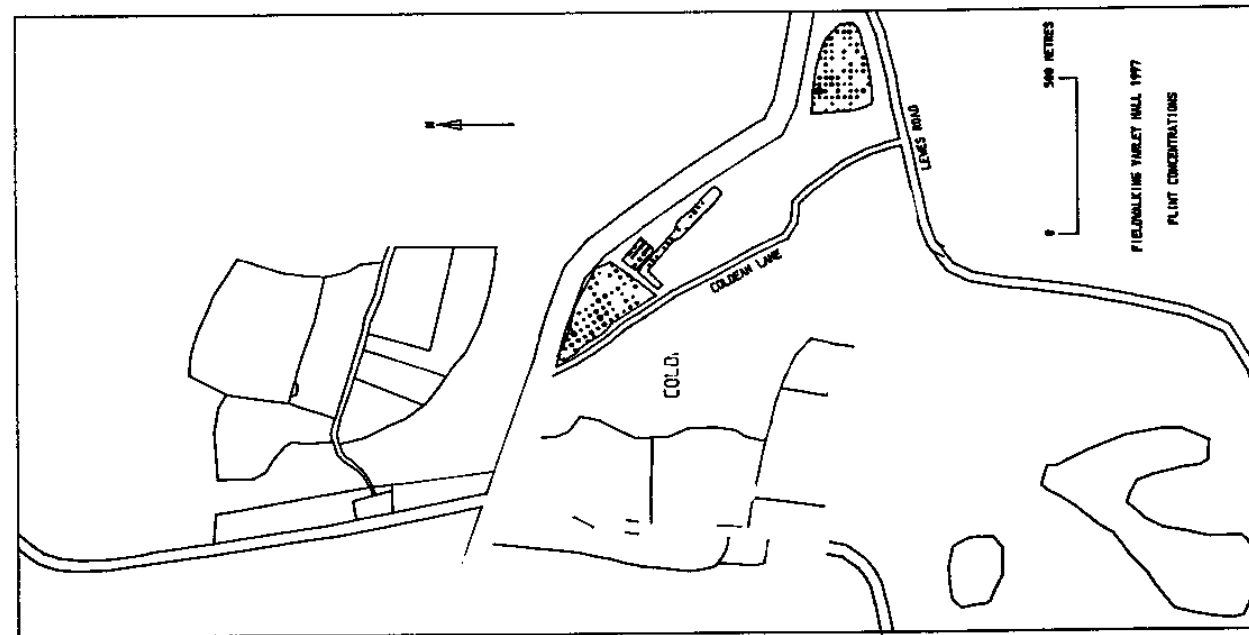


FIG 8.

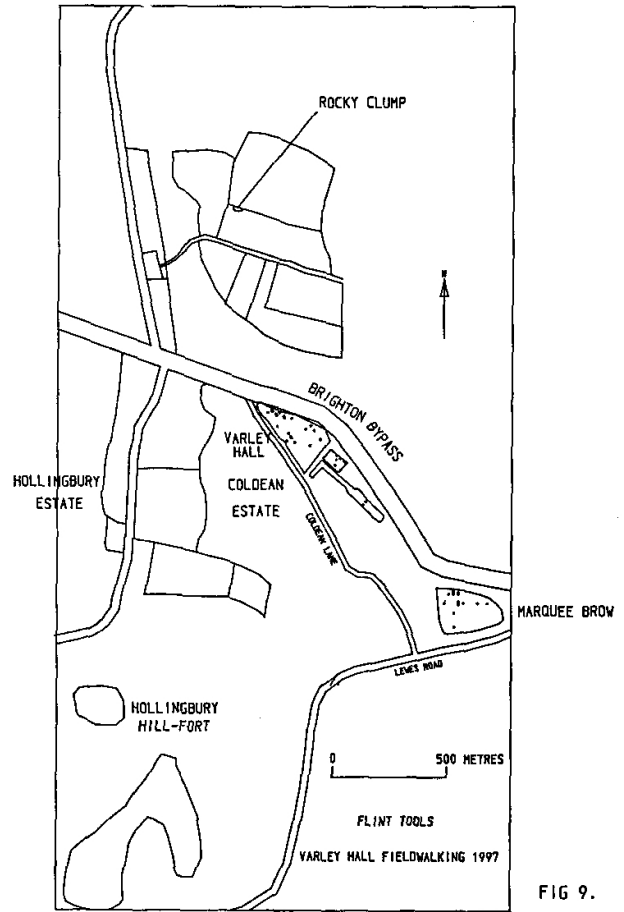
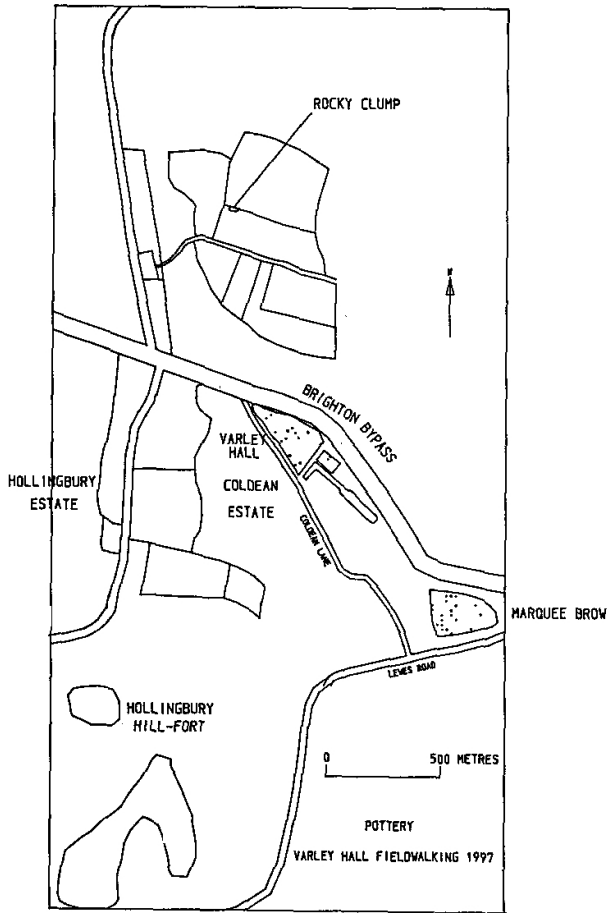


FIG 9.