

4. FIELDWORK RESULTS

Gavin MacGregor, Alistair Becket and David Sneddon

A more detailed account of fieldwork undertaken in October 2010 can be found in the data structure report (MacGregor, Becket & Sneddon 2010b). In summary, the aims and objectives of the evaluation were to ascertain the character, extent and date of any archaeological site determined by:

- surface collection of lithic artefacts, including quartz, from all exposed mounds on the terrace;
- excavation of testpits across the terrace (*c* 1m square) to evaluate the extent and preservation of in situ deposits and determine the likely impact of mounding on any subsurface archaeological deposits present;
- excavation of two hand-dug trenches to evaluate the extent and preservation of in situ deposits and investigate the impacts of mounding and earlier site operations on any artefacts and deposits present.

4.1 Surface collection

Struck lithics were collected from all exposed mounds on the terrace in October 2010 at the start of the evaluation. Finds were collected to a 1m level of resolution and surveyed to provide a plot of artefact distribution (see Illus 2). Surface collection recovered 140 worked lithics from 66 planting mounds, including two microliths and three microlith fragments (see Table 2). This confirmed the broad spatial distribution of the initial FCS surface collection.

4.2 Test pits

Hand excavation was undertaken of ten testpits across the terrace (*c* 1m square). The finds were recovered to a 0.25m level of resolution (Quads A–D and by 0.05m spits) and a bulk sample was typically taken from each pit for lithic and carbonised macroplant recovery. Two test pits (TP3 and TP10) were abandoned due to the difficulties presented by ground water *c* 0.45m below the surface.

In most cases the test pits (TP1, 2, 4, 7, 8 and 9) revealed that beneath the topsoil there was an

interface layer of mixed orange, grey and brown sands and silts which lay on the natural orange sand and clay subsoil. There was some evidence for leaching in the profiles and areas of iron pan on the surface of, and extending into, the subsoil. In several cases this was penetrated by old tree roots, relating to the previous conifer plantation. The interface layer appeared to be heavily mixed, probably as a result of bioturbation. Struck lithics were generally recovered from both topsoil and the interface layers. Towards the base and corner of TP6 was a potential feature defined by a concentration of oak charcoal (see Miller, Section 7 below). Unfortunately, there was ground water in a critical location which precluded further investigation.

4.3 Evaluation trenches

Two areas were subject to further evaluation through the expansion of the initial testpits to establish the extent and preservation of possible in situ deposits. The first was located on the main terrace, where there was an apparent lithic concentration, a linear trench (Tr11), measuring 5m by 1m incorporated TP4 and TP6. After removal of turf and topsoil, a mixed layer (C011= 008 in Tr6) containing struck lithics was present. It was excavated in 0.05m-deep spits, and artefacts were recovered three-dimensionally within the trench. Pieces were concentrated in the upper spit, with numbers falling off significantly in the second spit. No archaeological features were present and the lower deposits were not excavated.

The second area, Tr5, was located at the foot of the slope which defined the western extent of the terrace and measured up to 4m north to south by 2.7m east to west (Illus 3). Evaluation continued at this point because a notable concentration of struck lithics was present in TP5, which appeared to relate to a sealed soil horizon (C013), and to be associated with a concentration of stone (Deposit 015 (D015)) which was potentially archaeological. The extended area revealed identical deposits to those in the original test pit. Beneath the turf and topsoil was a colluvium layer (C009); this was excavated in spits down to the surface of the darker silt/sand (C013). The assemblage from this lower deposit was predominantly small fraction debitage with a few larger flakes and a mixed range of retouched pieces, including microliths and scrapers.



Illus 2 Artefact distribution



Illus 3 Excavation plan and section through Trench 5

The concentration of sub-angular and sub-rounded boulders and cobbles (D015) was revealed further, and some sat completely or partially upright within D013 (see Illus 3). The concentration of stone appeared to curve slightly from a north/south orientation round to the south-south-west and headed towards a very large boulder that had

collapsed from further up-slope which seemed to lie on top of D013. The base of D013 was not reached within a small excavated slot due to ground water. The stones (D015) were concentrated in a rough curvilinear shape and sat within what appeared to be a relatively undisturbed deposit (D013), suggesting that they are archaeological in origin.

4.4 Charcoal-burning platform

Located closer to the shore and beyond the concentration of struck lithics found on the terrace

are the remains of a charcoal-burning platform. It is a subcircular feature about 2.5m in diameter, associated with which is a marked quantity of charcoal visible on the surface.