



THE ARCHAEOLOGY CO.

Larkins Farm, Knowsley

fieldwalking / metal detector survey and
archaeological monitoring and recording

June 2026

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

A fieldwalking / metal detector survey and archaeological monitoring and recording was required Larkins Farm, Gellings Lane, Knowsley prior to the installation of a small solar power farm. The Archaeology Co was commissioned to carry out the work. The fieldwork was undertaken on 21st – 26th May 2026 by Pascal Eloy.

The walkover and metal detecting survey found 33 items, although only three were of note; a George II coin, a post-1650 gunflint, and a prehistoric whetstone of undetermined date. The watching brief revealed the natural clay close to the surface with field drains constructed for drainage. No further artefacts were discovered.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Steven Price of The Archaeology Co. has been commissioned to carry out a fieldwalking / metal detector survey and archaeological monitoring and recording at Larkins Farm, Knowsley. Condition 5 of planning application (23/02676/FUL) states:

No development shall take place until a scheme has secured for the implementation and submission of a report on a programme of archaeological works. That programme of archaeological works should be undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to works taking place. The WSI must include:

- a. A phased programme and methodology of site investigation and recording;*
- b. A programme for post-investigation reporting to include production of a final report of the significance of the below-ground archaeological interest;*
- c. Provision for appropriate publication and dissemination of the archaeology and history of the site;*
- d. Provision for archive deposition of the report, finds and records of the site investigation; and*

e. Nomination of a competent person or persons / organisation to undertake the works set out within the approved WSI.

Reason: In order to preserve archaeological records of the site.

- 1.2 The development works are for the “installation of solar farm, organic boundary fencing, 1no sub station, 1no transformer building, site service access, associated landscaping and bio-diversity improvements”.
- 1.3 This procedure followed the advice of Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework. This requires that “Local planning authorities should make information about the significance of the historic environment gathered as part of plan-making or development management publicly accessible. They should also require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible” (NPPF 2024).

2. SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 The site lies to the southern side of the slip road from the M57 northbound to the East Lancashire Road westbound, to the north of Larkins Farm. The postal address is Larkins Farm, Gellings Lane, Knowsley, Knowsley L34 9EN and the NGR is SJ 41491 96307. The site is currently agricultural land and the surrounding land is a rural including small wooded areas and further agricultural land. The underlying geology is Chester Formation Sandstone, with superficial deposits of Devensian till (BGS 2023).

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the field walking and metal detecting are to provide information about the archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, and date. It is also to identify any 'hot spots' of archaeological activity to inform the subsequent monitoring and recording.
- 3.2 Archaeological monitoring and recording is a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive. The monitoring and recording will provide an opportunity for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard (ClfA 2023).

The Northwest Regional Research Framework (2026) was consulted with the following questions relevant to this field survey:

PH01: How can we maximise potential recovery of lithics?

PH04: How can we enhance existing datasets for Prehistory in the region?

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 For both the fieldwalking and metal detecting, the field was divided into a series of parallel transects set out 10m apart. The transects were set out using GPS and marked with temporary markers. The metal detecting was undertaken along each transect by sweeping the search head as close to the surface as possible and allowing for a 30% overlap in order to produce a consistent sample, covering a width of c. 1m either side of the transect.
- 4.2 Where metal detector readings were produced, artefacts were removed using a spade and trowel, with all holes filled and levelled after removal. All finds of potential archaeological significance, from both field walking and metal detecting, were plotted using a GPS, and labelled with a unique ID number. Artefacts of modern date were collected and bagged together by transect to give a representative sample of the 'background noise' across the site.
- 4.3 An archaeologist was present during groundworks associated with the development, which for the installation of a substation and transformer building. Ground excavation was carried out with a toothless ditching bucket in level spits, with opportunities for archaeological observation. The attending archaeologist was given opportunity to direct the machine to stop to allow inspection, excavation and/or recording of potential archaeological features.
- 4.4 Where archaeological features were present, they were archaeologically exposed and recorded. All possible features and deposits were examined and tested. Encountered archaeological remains were cleaned manually to define their extent, nature, form, condition and, where possible, date. Discrete features were half sectioned.
- 4.5 Context sheets were used for recording on site features. Photographic recording was in the form of digital photography (DSLR 10 Megapixel minimum) with appropriate photo scale present in each of the shots. Features were located in plan at 1:20 scale.

5. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The site is shown on the 1847 tithe plan as several enclosed fields all owned by the Earl of Sefton and occupied by Robert Atherton. Randles Bridge Farm is shown to the north of the site (although unnamed). This situation remained the same on the 1850 OS mapping 1:10,560 (first ed.), with Gravel Pits shown to the north and the land remaining undeveloped. The 1893 OS map 1:2,500 shows a similar situation, although the field boundaries had been altered to create more regular rectangular field systems. By 1908 several boundaries had been removed to create larger fields and by 1927 more boundaries had been removed to create large open fields. This remained the situation through much of the 20th century. The current Randles Bridge Farm was not shown on the 1939 OS mapping suggesting it was built after this time and likely replacing the original Randles Bridge Farm following the construction of the M57.
- 5.2 The site appears to have been undeveloped over its life. Several prehistoric artefacts have been discovered in the surrounding area, most notably a Bronze Age perforated stone adze head near Randles Bridge Farm (HER No. MME5206). Others include flints at Croxteth Park and to the north of Stand Farm.

6. RESULTS

- 6.1 From the field walking 33 objects were found. Seven pieces of flint were found; five were pebbles and 2 showed working. One was identified as a D-shaped gunflint, not used prior to 1650 (28), whereas the other was a fragment showing working on two edges (32). However, this was, later found to be natural. A George III coin from 1816 was also found (item 14), as well as a flattened pebble, identified as a possible prehistoric whet stone (item 23). Other finds were a mixture of buttons and machine components. Most finds were from the western side of the site.

Item Number	Material	Object	Age
01	Copper	machine component	Post-med
02	Aluminium	hoop segment	Post-med
03	Copper	button	Post-med
04	Copper	button attachment	Post-med
05	Copper or Brass	machine component	Post-med
06	Lead	flat bent fragment	Post-med
07	Copper or brass	machine component fitting	Post-med
08	copper	Victorian coin heavily corroded	Victorian
09	Copper or brass	machine component fitting	Post-med
10	lead	melted flat fragment	Post-med
11	copper	button	Post-med
12	Flint	broken pebble	Natural
13	Flint	small pebble	Natural
14	Silver	5 pence coin George 3rd 1816	1816
15	lead	flat bent fragment	Post-med
16	lead	lump	Post-med
16b	Flint	pebble fragment	Natural
17	lead	flat fragment	Post-med
18	iron	Plate. Possible plough component	Post-med
19	iron	Plate. Possible plough component	Post-med
20	flint	small pebble	Natural
21	iron	Plate. Possible plough component	Post-med
22	iron	Hoop. Possible machine component	Post-med
23	pebble	flattened surfaces possible whetstone	Prehistoric
24	lead	bent flat fragment	Post-med
25	bronze	heavily patinated lump with flat surface	unknown
26	flint	broken pebble possibly burnt	Natural

27	lead	flat bent fragment	Post-med
28	flint	D-shaped gunflint	Post 1650
29	copper	button attachment	Post-med
30	lead	shaped cone with hole unknown use	Post-med
31	copper	small elongated lump	Post-med
32	flint	small fragment worked on 2 edges	Natural

6.2 For the archaeological monitoring and recording, two trenches were excavated at the western end of the field. Trench 1 measured 5m by 6m and contained topsoil (01) a compact dark grey-brown sandy silt, 0.35m thick with root, sandstone fragments, and charcoal inclusions. Below the topsoil was (02), a compact yellow-brown clay with the odd pebble inclusion; The natural clay on site. Context [03] was a sandstone linear 6m long 0.25m wide. Made of roughly hewn sandstones measuring 0.26mx 0.22m x 0.08m variable in sizes. The stones were placed edge up forming a basic culvert. A ceramic drainpipe lay to the north of this along the same alignment, and a further ceramic drain intersected the culvert at right angles from the south.

6.3 Trench 2 contained the same topsoil and natural clay (01) and (02). [04] described a sandstone linear 5m long 0.4m wide. Made of roughly hewn sandstone blocks measuring 0.3m x 0.25m variable in sizes. The sandstones formed a basic culvert similar to [03]. [05] was a clay ceramic pipe with a flat base 0.45m long 0.25m wide. The pipe was located along the southern side of sandstone culvert [04]. No other features were encountered.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The field walking confirmed the presence of flint on the site, although only one was found to be worked and was not prehistoric. A possible whetstone was found however, of uncertain date, but likely prehistoric. Other prehistoric finds have been discovered in the surrounding area, including the Bronze Age adze head at Randles Farm (HER No. MME5206), but also 5 struck flints found in a field to the northwest of Stand Farm (HER No. MME5196). Two of these pieces are associated with blade manufacture and one is thought to be Mesolithic in date. This spread of dates from Mesolithic to Bronze Age suggests the area saw human activity throughout its history.
- 7.2 The field walking and metal detecting found a further 26 objects from across the site, including a D-Shaped gunflint dated post 1650 and a Georgian coin. However, the remaining objects were post-medieval machine components and buttons and related to the later agricultural use of the site.
- 7.3 Trench one contained a sandstone culvert orientated east - west, the sandstones were placed edge up forming a small channel which was silted up. The culvert was thought to be a relatively early feature however no dating evidence was retrieved. A similar culvert was seen in trench 2 and ran parallel to the culvert in trench 1. The sandstones were not edge up but placed laterally. A ceramic pipe had been inserted along the southern side, which may have been the reason the sandstones were now lateral as opposed to edge up. The ceramic pipes indicated that irrigation was maintained and upgraded at a later date. Both culverts were thought to be contemporary and were likely to form a grid of similar features across the landscape.
- 7.3 The project did not find enough data to address the Northwest Regional Research Framework questions.

8. ARCHIVE

- 8.1 The results of the watching brief form the basis of a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current Historic England guidelines ('The Management of Archaeological Projects' 2015); the 'Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage' (UKIC 1990); current ClfA 'standards and guidance for the creation, compilation, transportation and deposition of archaeological archive' (published 2020). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. The deposition of a properly ordered and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the ClfA in that organisation's code of conduct.
- 8.2 All digital data created over the course of this project will be collected, stored, and selected for final deposition. Only final copies of any born digital data will be deposited in the final project archive. Deselected material is expected to include duplicates and any non-final versions of data. In terms of photographic images, this would include blurred or light imbalanced images. Deselected material will be deleted following acceptance of the archive.
- 8.3 The primary digital archive shall be deposited with the Archaeological Data Service (ADS), with a secondary digital archive provided on a PC compatible CD-ROM to National Museums Liverpool. As such, along with the report, a CD containing the digital photographs shall also be deposited. The primary digital archive, comprising the digital photographs shall be saved as tiff files following ADS guidance, and deposited with them, along with a digital copy of the report. A digital copy of the report will also be sent to MEAS.

8. COPYRIGHT

- 8.1 Full copyright of this commissioned report and other project documents shall be retained by the author of the report under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbreviations

CIfA	Chartered Institute for archaeologists
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
OS	Ordnance Survey

Literature

BGS 2023 "Geology Viewer". Accessed online at:

<https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/>

CIfA 2017 "Updated Guidelines to the Standards for Recording Human Remains"

CIfA 2020 "Standards and guidance for the creation, compilation, transportation and deposition of archaeological archive"

CIfA 2023 "Standard for archaeological monitoring & recording"

Historic England 2015 "Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment"

Historic England 2018 "Our Portable Past"

National Museums Liverpool 2022 "Guidelines for the Transfer of Archaeological Archives to the Museum of Liverpool"

"National Planning Policy Framework" 2012 accessed online at www.communities.gov.uk

Portable Antiquities Scheme 2017 "Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting in England and Wales". Accessed online at:
<https://finds.org.uk/getinvolved/guides/codeofpractice>

UKIC 1990 "Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage"

Appendix 1: Figures

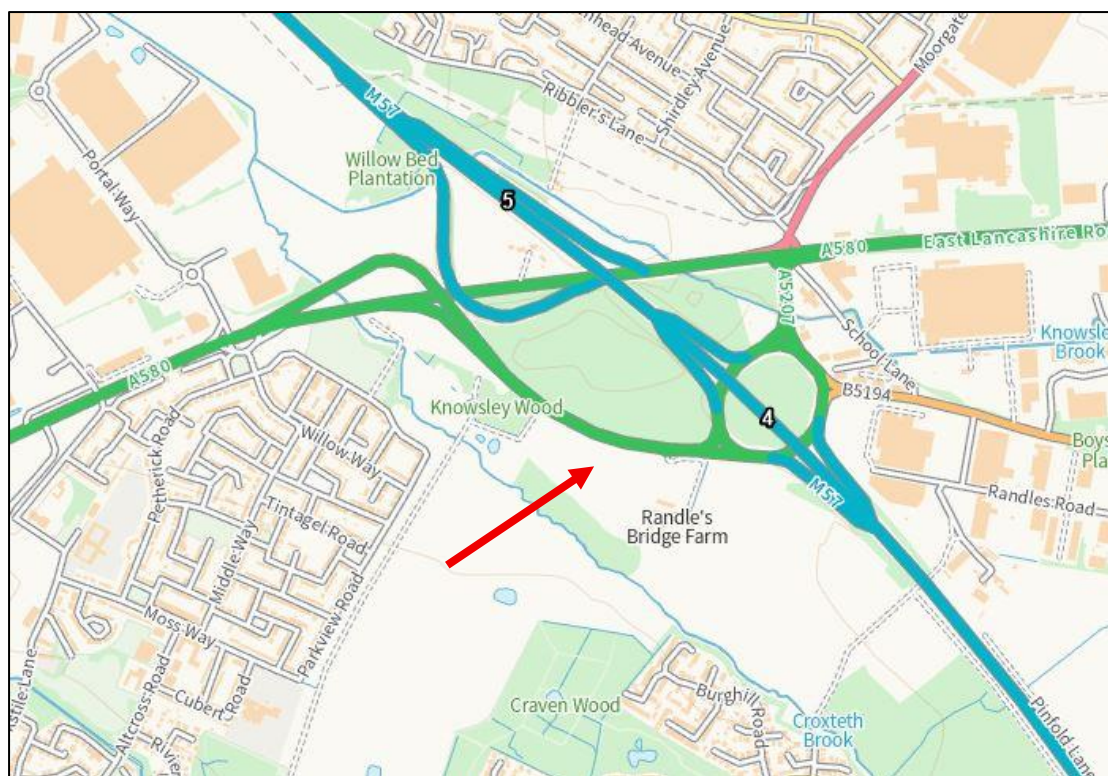


Figure 1: Location Plan (OS Licence Number: 100057911)

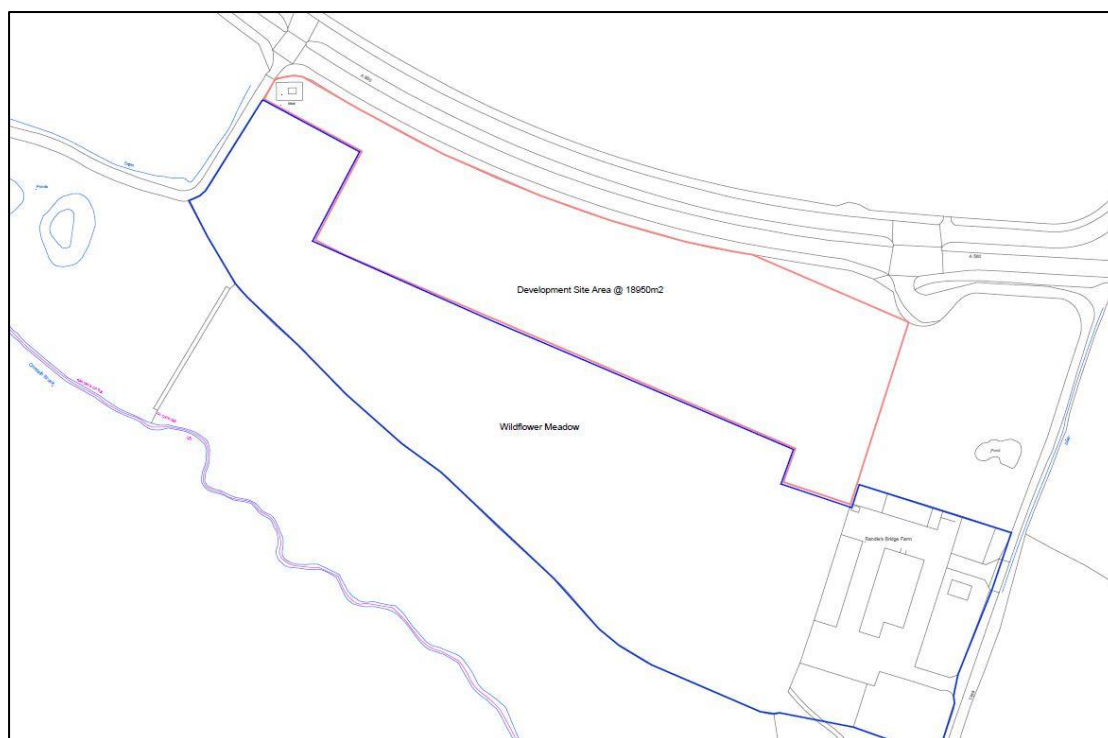


Figure 2: Site Plan (Courtesy of client)



Figure 3: 1841 tithe plan



Figure 4: 1850 OS Map 1:10,560 Lancashire Sheet 100

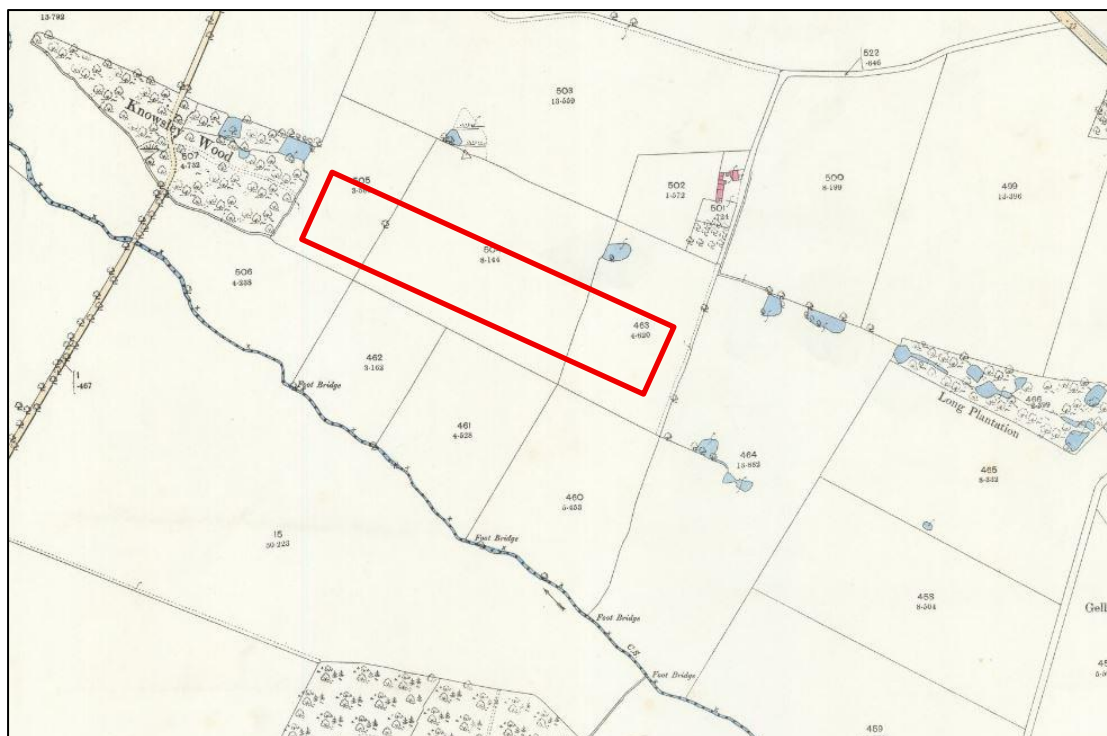


Figure 5: 1893 OS map 1:2,500 Lancashire Sheet C.13

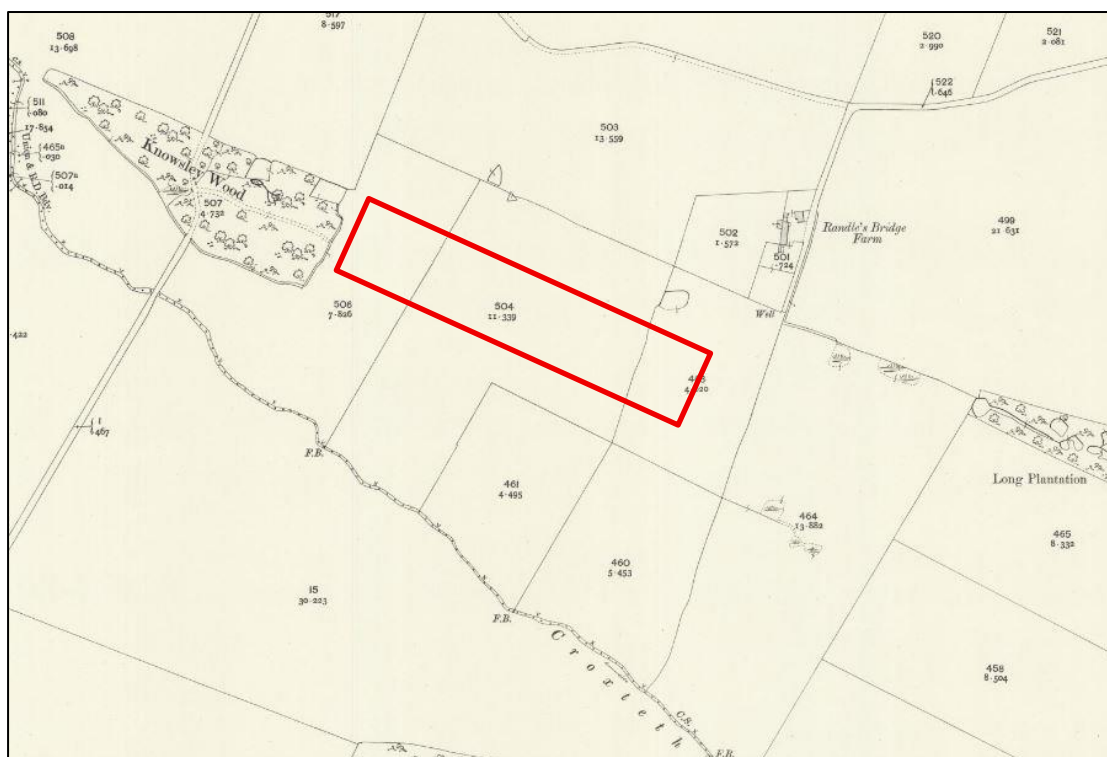


Figure 6: 1908 OS map Lancashire Sheet C.13



Figure 7: 1927 OS map Lancashire Sheet C.13

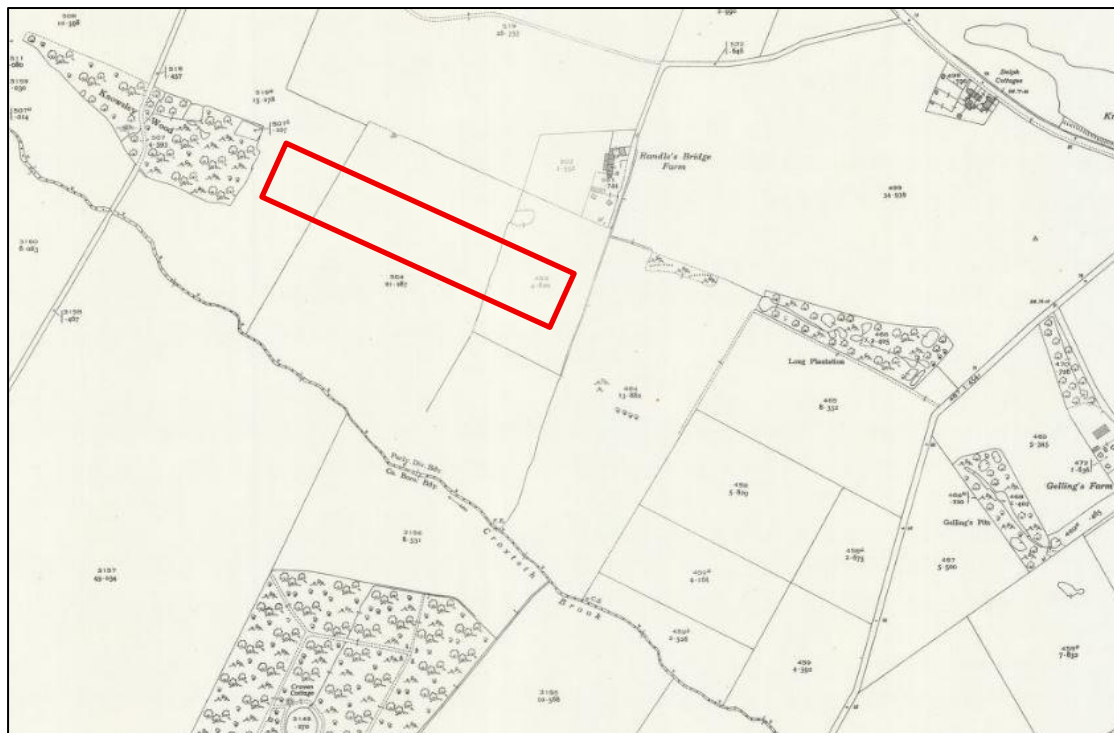
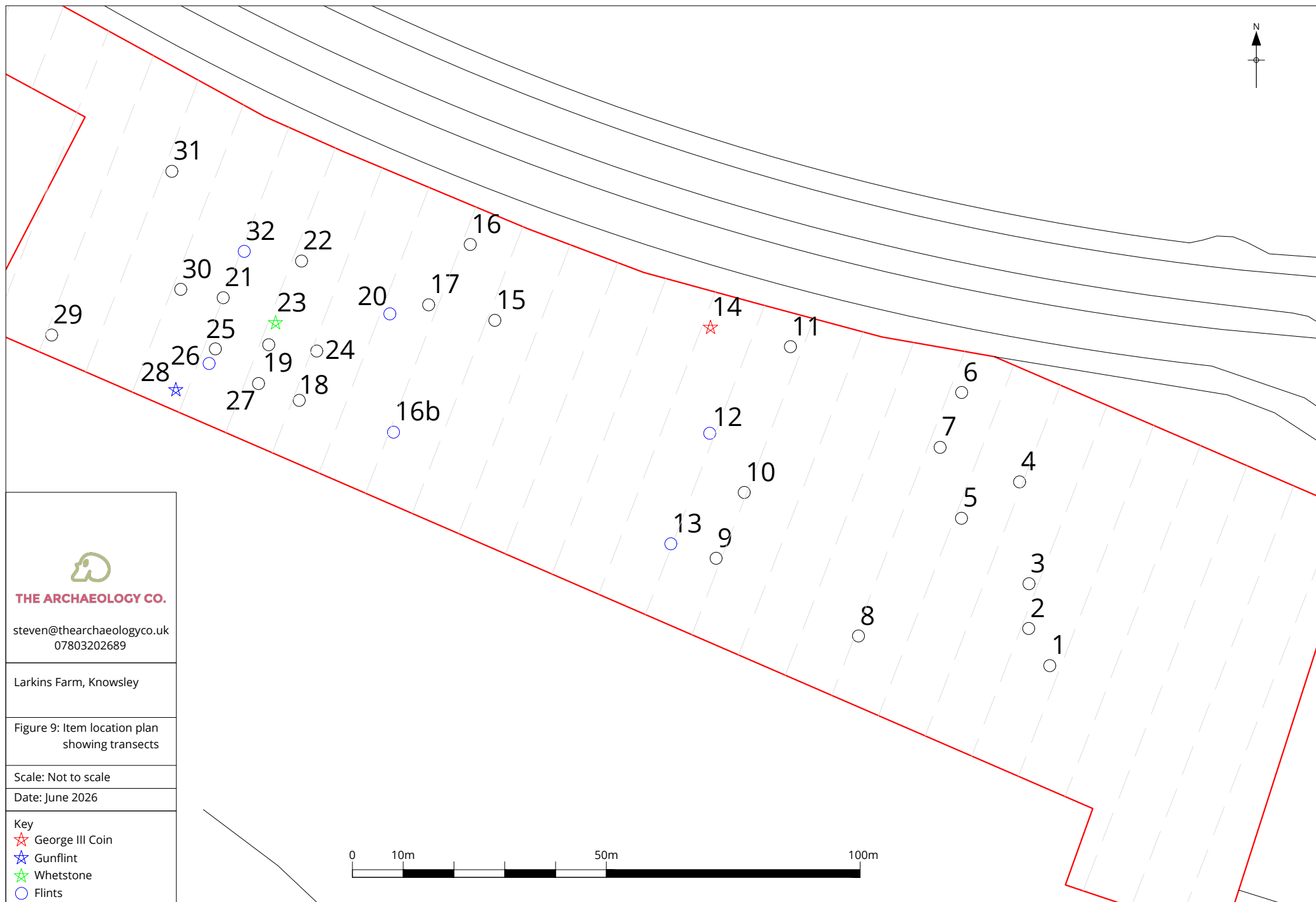


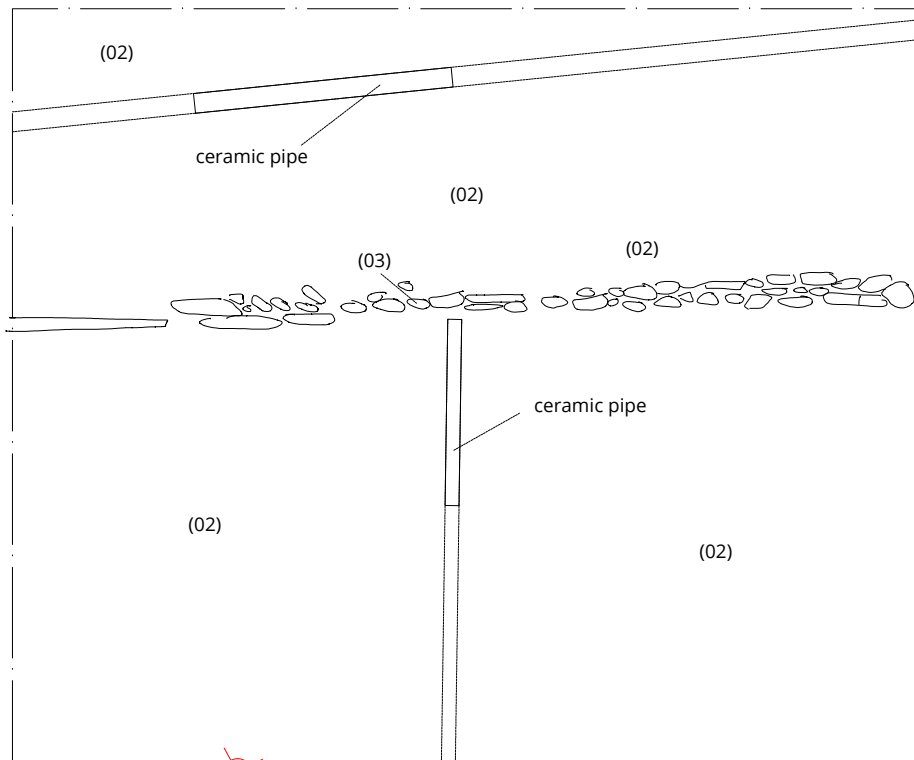
Figure 8: 1939 OS map Lancashire Sheet C.13



341331 , 396402



Trench 1



341326 , 396398



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Figure 10: Trench plans

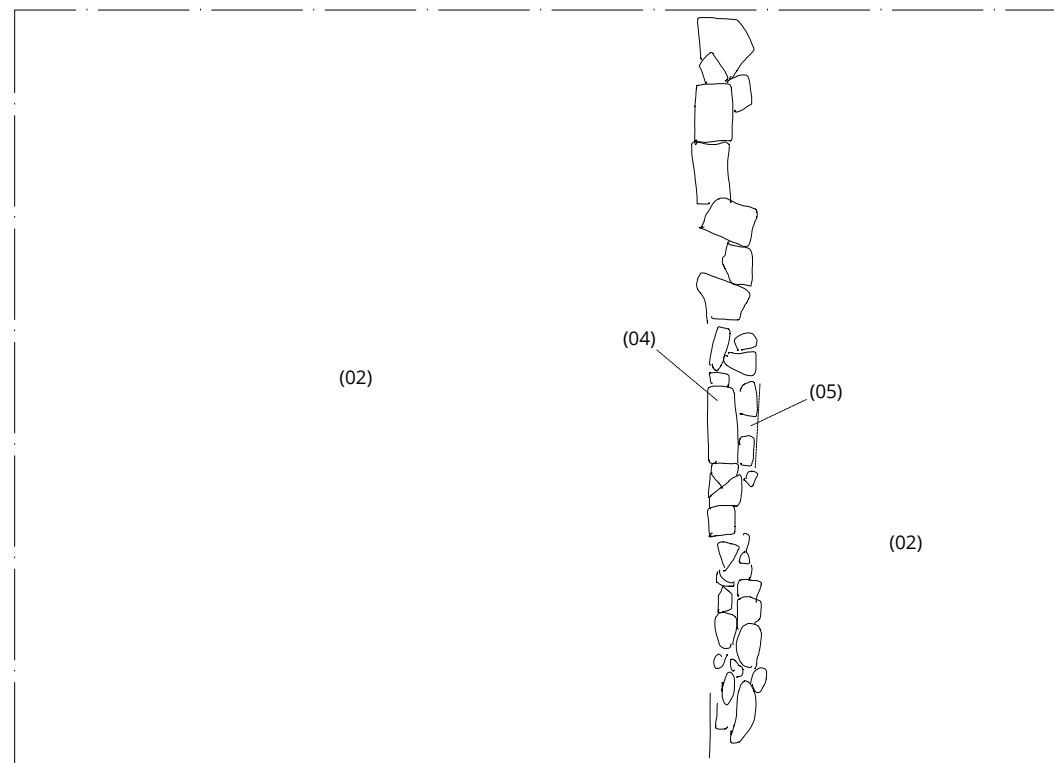
Scale: 1:50

Date: June 2026



341344 , 396395

Trench 2



341338 , 396391



Appendix 2: Plates



Plate 1: George III coin item 14



Plate 2: George III coin item 14



Plate 3: D-shaped gunflint item 28



Plate 4: D-shaped gunflint item 28



Plate 5: Possible prehistoric whetstone item 23



Plate 6: Trench 1 initial opening



Plate 7: Trench 1



Plate 8: Trench 1



Plate 9: Sandstone culvert (03)



Plate 10: Detail of above



Plate 11: South facing section showing topsoil (01) over natural clay (02)



Plate 12: Working shot of trench 2 excavation



Plate 13: Sandstone culvert (04)



Plate 14: Culvert (04) detail



Plate 15: Ceramic drain (05)



Plate 16: South facing section

Appendix 3: Context List

Context No.	Description
01	A compact dark grey brown sandy silt 0.35m thick with root, sandstone fragment, and charcoal inclusions. The top soil on site
02	A compact yellow brown clay with the odd pebble inclusion. The natural clay on site.
03	A sandstone linear 6m long 0.25m wide. Made of roughly hewn sandstones measuring 0.26mx 0.22m x 0.08m variable in sizes. The sandstones were place edge up forming a basic culvert.
04	A sandstone linear 5m long 0.4m wide. Made of roughly hewn sandstones measuring 0.3m x 0.25m variable in sizes. The sandstones formed a basic culvert.
05	A clay ceramic pipe with a flat base 0.45m long 0.25m wide. The pipe was located along the southern side of sandstone culvert [04].

Appendix 4: Finds Reports

ELIZABETH FOULDS ARTEFACT SPECIALIST

An assessment on the small finds from Larkins Farm, Knowsley

for The Archaeology Co.

Report no. 2026-022

Submitted 6 July 2026

Version 1.0

INTRODUCTION

Archaeological works were conducted at Larkins Farm, Knowsley (NGR: SJ 41491 96307) led by The Archaeology Co. in May 2026. The works consisted of a fieldwalking and metal detector survey, which recovered 33 objects from the site. Subsequently, a phase of archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out but did not reveal any significant archaeological features or artefacts. Previous archaeological discoveries within the vicinity of the site included a perforated stone adze and worked flints.

This report considers two objects that were collected during the surveys: a worked stone and a copper-alloy fragment. The stone is likely to be prehistoric in date, while the copper-alloy object could not be closely dated. This report includes identification of all artefacts where possible, discussion of findings, and an assessment of significance.

METHOD

The artefacts were visually examined on 3 July 2026. Identifications and descriptions were recorded in a Microsoft Access database. The specialist finds recording and reporting was completed in accordance with the national finds standards and guidance (EH 2008; ClfA 2014, 2021a, 2025). Where possible, all objects were identified by material and object type using the FISH Thesaurus for materials, archaeological objects and periods and the ClfA *Toolkit for Recording Archaeological Materials* as appropriate (ClfA 2021b; FISH 2023a, 2023b). All objects and fragments were described, counted, weighed and recorded, and the full data can be found in the accompanying spreadsheet. Finds were identified using comparative excavation reports, finds syntheses, and typologies.

This report was prepared with support from the North West England Regional Research Framework (2026) and a draft version of the fieldwork report results (The Archaeology Co. 2026). Throughout this report, reference to specific fragments is made using the SF number. This number corresponds with the appropriate field in the accompanying spreadsheet.

RESULTS

The objects considered here includes two fragments weighing 257.1g in total. Both objects were recovered during the fieldwalking/metal detector survey and are in good condition.

No. 23 is a long stone cobble with a triangular cross-section and at least one utilised face. It may have been used for grinding or polishing and is likely to be of prehistoric date.

No. 25 is a copper-alloy fragment that possibly has a high lead content. It is roughly rectangular in shape with one flat surface. It cannot be identified further and is of uncertain date.

DISCUSSION AND STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The archaeological works at Larkins Farm, Knowsley revealed evidence for a culvert and a ceramic drainage pipe. The two finds considered in this report include a utilised stone, likely of prehistoric date, and a copper-alloy fragment that could be not closely dated. The stone is archaeologically significant, while the copper-alloy object is of limited archaeological significance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This report and associated data should be integrated into any site-wide grey literature or publication reporting and retained within the site archive.

No further work is required.

Storage and condition and preservation of the archive

The artefacts were suitable packaged and labelled with the correct site information.

Retention

The worked stone (no. 23) is of archaeological significance and should be retained in the project archive. The copper-alloy object (no. 25) is of low significance and can be discarded in line with the collecting organisations guidance and policies.

REFERENCES

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Larkins Farm, Knowsley, Cumbria 2026

Lithic Assessment Report

20 July 2026

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1. Introduction

Two lithic objects (weighing 6.36g) were recovered during fieldwalking and metal detector survey at Larkins Farm, Gellings Lane, Knowsley (NGR: SJ 41491 96307). The survey was conducted between 21–26 May 2026 by The Archaeology Co. as part of an application for planning permission (23/02676/FUL) in advance of a solar farm installation. While prehistoric material culture has been recovered from the surrounding area, the assessment found that, where worked, the lithics can be dated to the post-medieval period.

2. Methodology

Recording took place on the 20 July 2026. Both recording and reporting were carried out in accordance with existing guidelines (Watkinson and Neal 2001; English Heritage 2008; ClfA 2014; ClfA 2021). Where reference to specific guidance within the literature on stone tools has been made, this is stated in the data field list below or within the text. All material was inspected by eye with the aid of a hand lens where necessary and data was recorded in a Microsoft Access database created specifically to record lithic artefacts. Data is provided as both a database and Excel spreadsheet.

Throughout the report, references to specific lithics are made using a combination of site code and a unique identification number prefixed with 'L', which corresponds to the accompanying database. Bags have been marked to indicate which artefacts they contain.

The report was prepared with reference to an archaeological monitoring report (The Archaeology Co. 2026).

Fields used in the accompanying data spreadsheet and Access database are described below. This metadata is included in the accompanying Excel sheet.

Site Information

<i>Field_no</i>	Field number, if applicable
<i>Area</i>	Area, if applicable. If the artefact is unstratified, this is noted here.
<i>Trench</i>	Trench number or code, if applicable.
<i>Context_no</i>	The context number.
<i>Sam_code</i>	Sample code, if relevant.
<i>RF_no.</i>	Recorded find number, if applicable.
<i>Quantity</i>	Number of pieces. Usually '1' and used to calculate total numbers.
<i>Flint_no</i>	A unique number assigned for the purposes of the lithic catalogue.

Raw material

<i>Material</i>	Whether flint, chert, quartz etc.
<i>Mat_col</i>	A description of the colour of the raw material.
<i>Cortex</i>	The amount of cortex present, expressed as a percentage value in 5% increments. In the case of flakes and flake tools, this is expressed as the percentage of the dorsal surface.
<i>Cort_col</i>	A description of the colour of the cortex, where present.
<i>Patina</i>	The amount of patination of the surface, excepting cortex, expressed as a percentage value in 5% increments.
<i>Pat_col</i>	A description of the colour of the patination, where present.

Technology

<i>Type</i>	The type of artefact, e.g., 'flake', 'blade', 'debitage', 'core', 'burnt fragment', or tool types, such as 'scraper', 'arrowhead', 'burin'.
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<i>Deb-type</i>	If identified as debitage, this provides the type as a subcategory, e.g., 'indeterminate fragment', 'chip', 'shatter' etc.
<i>Size</i>	Individual measurements have not been taken at this stage. Sizes are provided in millimetres, with the maximum dimension, or in the case of flakes, maximum length, given.
<i>L</i>	Maximum length in mm to one decimal place.
<i>W</i>	Maximum width in mm to one decimal place.
<i>Th</i>	Maximum thickness in mm to one decimal place.
<i>Plat-ang</i>	The angle between the striking platform and the knapping surface.
<i>R_seq</i>	Stage of the knapping sequence, given as 'primary', 'secondary' or 'tertiary'. The term 'thermal' is used to note heat fracture.
<i>Plat</i>	The type of platform (for flakes, where present), based on Andrefsky (2005, 96), i.e., 'cortical', 'flat', 'complex', or 'abraded'.
<i>Bulb</i>	A description of the bulb of percussion (where present), recorded as 'pronounced', or 'diffuse'.
<i>Frac</i>	The type of termination based on Cotterell and Kamminga (1987), i.e., 'feathered', 'step', 'hinge', or 'overshoot'.
<i>Wg</i>	Weight in grams to two decimal places.
Retouch	
<i>Ret</i>	An indicator of whether retouch is present. Where retouch is visible, the following categories are recorded, based on Ballin (2000).
<i>Ret-cou</i>	The course of the retouch present, recorded as 'straight', 'convex', 'concave', 'notched', 'denticulate', 'nosed', 'shouldered' and 'tanged'.
<i>Ret-ty</i>	The type of retouch present, recorded as 'edge', 'invasive' and 'complete'.
<i>Ret_ex</i>	Extent of retouch, recorded as either 'continuous' or 'sporadic'.
<i>Ret_or</i>	Orientation of the retouch, whether originating from the ventral ('normal') or dorsal ('inverse'), or 'alternating', 'propellar' or 'bifacial'.
<i>Ret_fin</i>	The fineness of the retouch, ranging from 'very fine' to 'very coarse'.
<i>Ret-morph</i>	The morphology of the retouch.
<i>Ret-ang</i>	The angle that the retouch has been applied at, ranging from 'very acute' to 'obtuse'.
Damage	
<i>Burnt</i>	This column uses an ordinal scale to indicate the exposure to burning an item has received. 0 = unburnt; 1 = lightly fired (surface sooting, light crazing); 2 = fired (surface and interior patination, surface cracks, but still retaining original form); 3 = heavily fired (complete surface and interior patination, pot lid fractures, shattering, original form cannot be determined).
<i>Dam</i>	Level of damage. 1 = fresh; 2 = lightly rolled; 3 = rolled; 4 = heavily rolled.
<i>Dam-descrip</i>	Description of any other damage present, e.g., 'plough', 'frost', 'edge chipping' etc.
Interpretation	
<i>Period</i>	Where the artefact is chronologically distinctive then the period is noted. Typological assessments are carried out in accordance with Butler (2005)
<i>Interp</i>	An interpretative description of the lithic(s), including an indication of further working, e.g., 'retouch' or 'edge use'.
<i>Notes</i>	Any additional notes, e.g., refits.

3. Results

The material submitted for assessment comprised two lithics, which were recovered during fieldwalking survey at Larkins Farm. Of these, one ([28]: L002) was identified as humanly worked. This was originally identified as a scraper, but assessment shows this to be a D-shaped gunflint, dating to the post-medieval period, most likely to the 18th century. The remaining fragment [32]; L001) is natural, displaying recent fractures

with no clear evidence of anthropogenic action. This natural fragment will not be discussed further in this report. The composition of the assemblage is presented in Table 1.

Raw material and condition

The gunflint was manufactured from grey flint displaying evidence of fossil inclusions. Cortex is mostly absent, with only a small amount retained on the proximal end near the end of the platform. This is white in colour and abraded. The dorsal surface is flat and displays no prior flake scars, suggesting the flake may have originated from a split cobble. No patina was observed, the lighter, more opaque grey being caused by the inclusions in the flint, rather than chemical weathering.

A local source for the flint would be the Devensian Till found within the area. However, as the artefact dates to the post-medieval period, it is more probable that this object was created elsewhere as part of the cottage industry that grew up around the manufacture of gunflints. Its exact origin is unknown, though it almost certainly did not originate from the flint industry of Brandon, Sussex, which is characterised by the use of black flint, generally displaying few inclusions.

Technological assessment

The single worked artefact ([28]; L002) is a D-shaped gunflint, a type that has previously been referred to as wedge-shaped or 'Clactonian' (Kent 1983; Ballin 2012). Retouch has been applied to the proximal (platform) end, extending along the lateral edges to form this classic shape, which corresponds closely to that depicted by de Lotbiniere (1984: 206, fig. 1). The distal end has been modified by very light retouch and/or edge damage, which may indicate retouching of the striking edge or use. No evidence of sooting or powder was observed, however.

This type of gunflint was not used prior to around 1650 (Kent 1983). They are referred to as D-shaped or wedge-shaped such due to their shape, with the bulb of percussion sitting below the heel of the gunflint. Manufacture of such gunflints is described in detail by de Lotbiniere (1984), and this particular example follows this description, with retouch of the lateral edges and heel applied from the lower face of the flint, while the trimming of the edge of the bevel applied from the upper face. These objects have a relatively long period of use, being present in England from around 1650, with the development of the cottage industry established for the production of gunflints, through to the end of the 18th century (Ballin 2012). Standardisation of gunflints wasn't prevalent until around the early part of the 18th century, with earlier examples often being more amorphous. The example recovered from Larkins Farm appears to be more standardised than unstandardised, and thus most likely dates to around the 18th century. Based on standardised measures for gunflints provided by Skertchley (see Ballin 2012: table 2), the measurements of this particular piece are suggestive of use in a sporting gun or carbine, although the gunflint is a little wider than the averages given. It is unlikely to be from a musket, which tended to use thicker flints.

4. Discussion and conclusions

The lithic assemblage from Larkins Farm comprises a single anthropogenic flint artefact, namely a gunflint that dates to the post-medieval period, most likely to the 18th century due to its standardisation in form. It is in keeping with the other post-medieval finds recovered during the field walking survey, although those that are clearly diagnostic point to a slightly later, early 19th-century date.

5. Recommendations

The gunflint should be retained for inclusion in the site archive. The natural material can be disposed of as required. Consideration should be given to the illustration of the gunflint as it forms a good example of a classic form.

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