

# Further Field Walking in Field Dalling

*by Eric Hotblack*

*Synopsis: a follow up to two sessions of field walking undertaken by BAHS members.*

## **Introduction**

**T**he two field walking events organised by the BAHS on the 9th February 2002 and 8th February 2003 provided some interesting finds in spite of the variable experience of the participants and the previous extensive work on this site by Ted and Eric Hotblack (TEH) which had already produced more than 10kg of pottery.

I am therefore grateful to the Editors for allowing a short update of the previous article,<sup>1</sup> and to explain the work carried out by Society members.

The Romano-British site (Sites and Monuments Register no. 21317) was chosen for the two events because of the relatively high frequency of pottery finds previously made by TEH, while the cropping of winter barley made it available on each occasion. Early February was chosen to try to achieve good conditions for field-work: the artifacts on the ground would have been well washed of loose soil by autumn and winter rain. On both days there was some wind and some direct sunlight which was slightly less than ideal.

The site is dissected roughly east-west by a hedge line (see the

previous article) which provided a base line to mark out a 25 x 25 metre square grid as shown in Figure 1. In 2002 the nine squares to the west were walked and in 2003 the nine squares to the east.

## **Results**

### **Romano-British**

From the work reported in the previous article one would expect a concentration of Romano-British finds along the hedge line fading out to the west, south and east. Indeed the combined results confirm this pattern (see Figure 2).

Surprisingly one piece of Samian Ware was found in 2002 and two in 2003. This is interesting because it was probably produced at Lezoux, near Clermont-Ferrand, and imports to Britain ceased around AD 200.<sup>2</sup> Prior to 2002 there had only been one piece of pottery with such an early provenance, a piece of Greyware, identified by the late Tony Gregory as 1st or 2nd century. So this site may have had activity during the early Roman period.

In contrast to the pottery finds, tile fragments and one piece of Box Flue tile (totalling eight pieces) were found in the western squares in 2002, but none were found in the eastern half. Some pieces of Post-Medieval tile were found in the same area, so surely if Romano-British material were present to the east it should have been found.

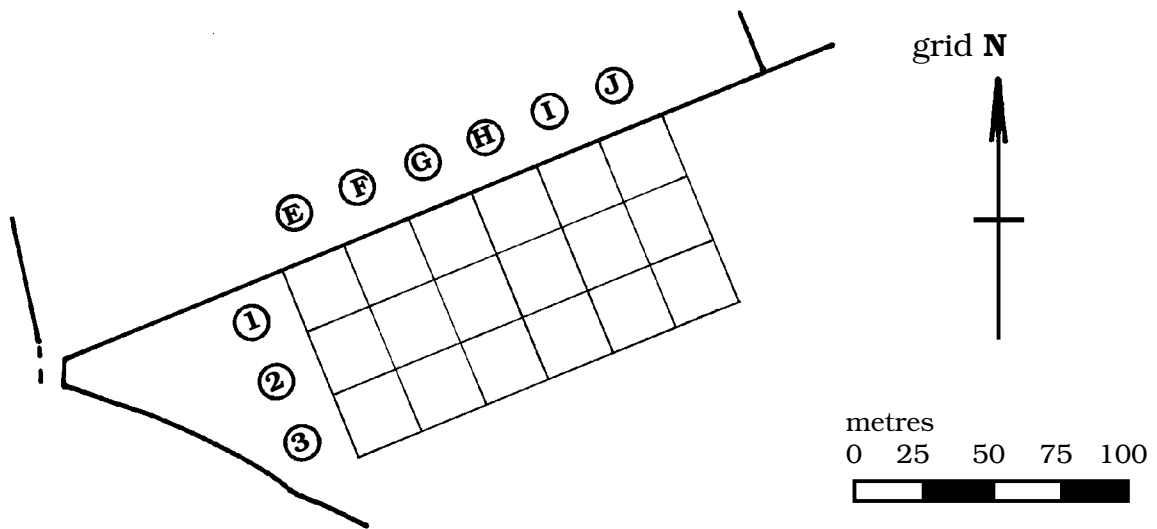


Figure 1. Field walking grid  
SMR 21317, from OS sheet TG 0137

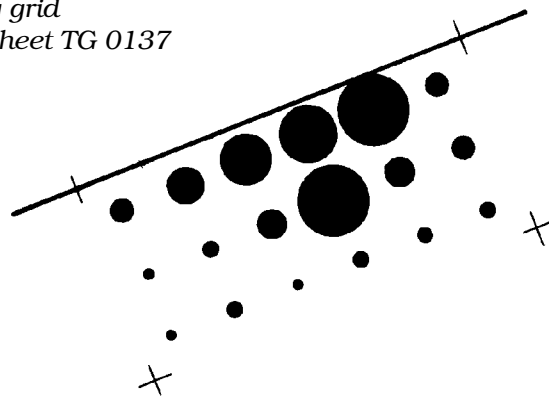


Figure 2. Romano-British period pottery  
distribution

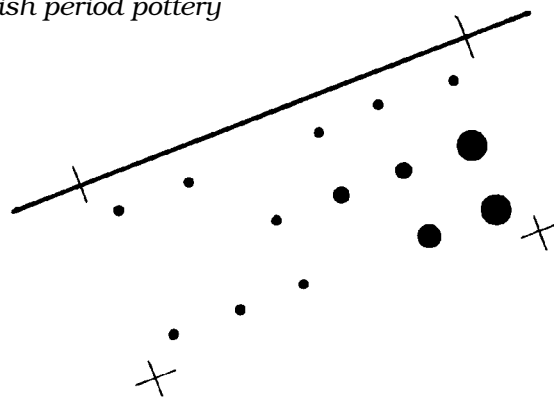


Figure 3. Medieval period pottery  
distribution

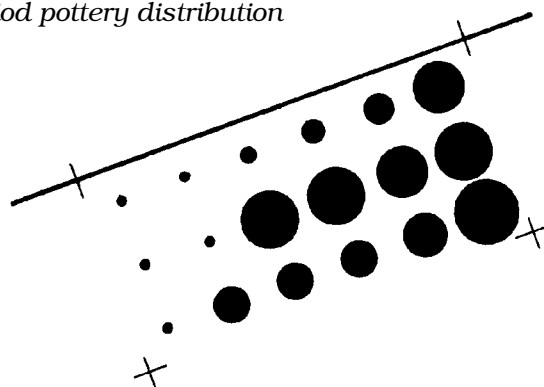


Figure 4. All worked flint  
distribution

Key to the number  
of finds per square

- 1 to 5
- 6 to 10
- 11 to 15
- 16 to 20
- 21 to 25
- 26 to 30
- 31 to 35
- 36 to 40
- 41 to 45
- 46 plus

### **Stone Age, Iron Age and Saxon**

The distribution of worked flint (Figure 4) is difficult to interpret. It is of course challenging to find worked flints in a field covered with flints!

Activity throughout all the 'stone ages' seems to create a certain blotchiness in distribution of worked flints.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately no individual diagnostic pieces were identified by Prof Robins to indicate which periods were represented.

The scarce local wares of the Iron Age and pagan Saxon period are difficult to distinguish even for the expert. None were found in the 2002 walking but nine shards were found in 2003. No plot has been made for these periods which are immediately before and after the far more find-rich Romano-British period. The best square was H2 with one shard identified as Iron Age and the remaining seven identified as "Pagan Saxon perhaps including some Iron Age".

### **Medieval**

A scatter of Medieval pottery was found, concentrated to the east (see Figure 3). This could result from 'manure scatter' during arable use. SMR site no.22442, two fields away to the northeast, had a medieval scatter of 2-9 shards per whole 25m square when walked by TEH in the winter of 1988/9, which supports this interpretation. If further adjoining squares were walked it would show whether the pottery density carried on increasing to the south and east, indicating some habitation, or if the quantity stayed at a density comparable with a 'manure scatter'. Comparing Figures 2 & 3 it can be seen that the finds density is higher even than the Roman period in some squares.

### **Post-Medieval**

The Post-Medieval period distribution, is not plotted, but it could be interpreted as another 'manure scatter' like the Medieval one.

A few pieces of 'china' were found in both years, as were pieces of iron slag. Clay tobacco pipe stems were found in 2002 but not in 2003; the latter are so conspicuous they are bound to have been picked up if present, but as only two were found in 2002 their absence the following year is not surprising. Also in 2002 one fragment of lava quern (undatable) was found, but none in 2003.

### **Summary**

**B**earing in mind the varying skills of the BAHS participating members it is encouraging that some interesting finds were made, particularly the Samian Ware. In spite of walking a total of only 18 squares comprising 1.12 hectares (2.78 acres) some differences in distribution of finds in the various periods are evident:

- Romano-British pottery concentrated in a central area
- the Romano-British building material only to the west
- medieval pottery shards increasing to the east
- the concentration of the Pagan Saxon/Iron Age shards in square H2

These eight Pagan Saxon/Iron Age shards were in a single square with 39 Romano-British shards so could easily have been overlooked which shows the value of thorough searching.

As discussed the worked flint distribution totalling 376 items is difficult to interpret, due to the lack of diagnostic finds.

Gridded field walking is a comparative method and despite having different people participating, this exercise demonstrates that some useful results can be achieved.

### Acknowledgement

Again many thanks are due to Dr Andrew Rogerson and Prof Peter Robins of the Finds Identification and Recording Service of the Norfolk Museums Service for their expert examination and identification of our finds.

### References

1. Eric Hotblack, 2002, *Fieldwalking at Manor Farm, Field Dalling*, 2002, *The Glaven Historian* No.5
2. Kevin Greene 1986 *The Archaeology of the Roman Economy* p161
3. Robert Silvester, *In Barton Bendish and Caldecote: Fieldwork in Southwest Norfolk*, *East Anglian Archaeology* No.80 1997, p79 and fig.37.

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## Norfolk Archaeologist in a hole?



See page 70 for the nitty-gritty...