

# Suburban life in Roman *Durnovaria*

Additional specialist report



Finds  
Flint

*By Matt Leivers*

## Flint

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The flint was examined during the assessment and given its largely residual nature no further analysis was undertaken. This report has been taken from the assessment (Wessex Archaeology 2006).

A total of 1006 pieces of struck flint were recovered (Table F1). With the exception of a very small number of flakes of Portland Chert, the whole assemblage consists of nodular flint. The predominant colour of the visible surfaces is dark grey-brown to dark grey. A large portion of the assemblage has a cream/white patina (many pieces are entirely patinated). The quality of the raw material varies, and both quality and condition point to a multi-period assemblage with a high degree of residuality and mixing.

*Table F1: The composition of the lithics assemblage*

<b>Flint Types</b>	<b>No.</b>
<b><i>Retouched tools:</i></b>	
Microliths	1
Scrapers	6
Burins	1
Piercers	4
Misc. retouched pieces	20
<i>Retouched tools sub-total</i>	32
<b><i>Debitage:</i></b>	
Flakes (incl. broken)	863
Blades (incl. broken)	13
Bladelets (incl. broken)	4
Chips	37
Irregular debitage	25
Core preparation / rejuvenation pieces	13
Cores / core fragments	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>1006</b>

More than 90% of the assemblage consisted of unretouched debitage (flakes, blades, bladelets, chips and irregular pieces) together with a small number of cores and core fragments.

The majority of the cores were basically nodules from which some flakes had been removed, generally with little or no attention paid to platform maintenance or controlled reduction. The unskilled nature of this working is mirrored in the bulk of the flakes, which are generally thick and fairly large with broad platforms and numerous signs of error such as incipient percussion cones and hinge or step terminations. In general the bulk of the assemblage is entirely typical of late lithic technologies – perhaps Late Bronze Age, more likely Iron Age, and some possibly even from the production of building stone in the Romano-British period.

There are however a number of indicators of earlier activity. Some pieces (two cores, the small number of true blades, some of the retouched flakes) appear to be products of Stone Age technologies rather than Iron Age ones, but are not more closely dateable. These include the flakes of Portland chert, which are more likely to be Mesolithic, Neolithic or Early Bronze Age (one is possibly an axe flake). A microlith was recovered (a Type D1bii in Clarke's 1934 series), which dates from the Later Mesolithic. A sub-circular scraper with continuous retouch leaving only the platform unaltered is of Beaker type.

The range of tools is very limited. The scrapers are morphologically varied, but none would appear to predate the later Neolithic. A single example is made on Portland Chert. The piercers are tentative identifications, although all have damage at the point that may result from use. The dihedral burin is a certain example, and really a multi-purpose tool, having use-wear below the burin removal and blunting and edge damage on the opposite margin. It is not closely dateable. There are no burin spalls. The retouched tools are far fewer in number than pieces with edge damage indicative of use, although the latter are doubtless over-represented given the amount of edge damage due to post-depositional factors.

### **Burnt flint**

There were 108 pieces of burnt (unworked) flint weighing 2,533g. No significant concentrations of material were noted, with a maximum of 15 pieces in any one context (most had only between two and five). The material is intrinsically undatable, and need not be exclusively associated with prehistoric activity.

### **Bibliography**

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This report is supplementary material to the publication  
**Suburban life in Roman *Durnovaria***  
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ISBN 978-1-874350-46-0

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