



ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS AT CURZON LODGE, LONGCLIFFE, DERBYSHIRE

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In 2008 Archaeological Research Services Ltd. carried out a programme of works including earthwork and geophysical surveys, the opening of 83 test pits and 13 evaluation trenches across three fields, and culminating in an area excavation at Curzon Lodge, Brassington, Derbyshire. The work was undertaken on behalf of Longcliffe Quarries Ltd, prior to development of the land for the construction of a head office, transport depot and dimensional stone workshops. The earthwork and geophysical surveys did not identify any features of archaeological significance, other than three small, modern 'stone-getting' pits, features which are very common within the Peak District. Twenty-two of the test pits were found to contain artefacts within the topsoil, ranging from prehistoric chipped stone tools to modern pottery sherds. During the evaluation trenching programme three pit features with associated finds were found. One of the features, located at the base of the slope in Field B, was found to contain two sherds of Neolithic pottery and worked flint. As part of the subsequent area excavation Field B was also found to contain four additional features. However, these were very badly truncated by earlier agricultural activity and the interpretation of the features is therefore problematic. They are considered to have been a possible domestic pit, a possible post-hole and two hearth-pits, the latter two features producing radiocarbon dates spanning the latter centuries of the 4th millennium cal. BC. The archaeological evidence from the site, although limited, is thought to be related to settlement occupation dating to the Early Neolithic period. The largest of the hearth-pits produced five pieces of flint, one with diagnostic Mesolithic characteristics suggesting the inclusion of some residual material in the pit fill, but none of the other features produced any artefacts and there were no other archaeological features, deposits, buried land surfaces or small finds located across the other areas stripped.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Curzon Lodge is situated approximately 0.5km to the east of the village of Longcliffe, off the B5056 in Derbyshire at grid reference SK 233 561 (Fig. 1). The site lies on an east facing slope that descends c.35m (325m OD – 290m OD) and covers an area of approximately 9400m². It comprised three pasture fields (Fields A, B and C) that lie to the immediate east and north of the current buildings (Fig. 1). The archaeological works took the form of test-pitting, evaluation trenching and a strip, map and sample and were carried out prior to development of the site for an office, workshops and transport depot. The solid geology of the site comprises Carboniferous Limestone with overlying till and mudstones in places (BGS 1978).

The site lies less than 1km north-west of a distinctive dolomite ridge, Harborough Rocks, an area of

considerable prehistoric activity as well as later lead mining and quarrying during the 19th and 20th centuries (Jones and Brown 2007, 7). Although there have been isolated Mesolithic finds in three locations in the vicinity of Curzon Lodge the most important finds and sites in the immediate area have been from the Neolithic and Bronze Age. Evidence for Neolithic and Bronze Age activity in the area usually takes the form of flint artefacts and waste material. Finds have often been found within the thin soils after ploughing but lithic scatter concentrations can be dispersed within a couple of plough seasons (Hart 1987, 67). In Bronze Age assemblages untrimmed flint nodules have been found with other artefact and waste scatters at Curzon Lodge (Hart 1984, 67). The 'Radford Collection' consists of a group of finds and sites recorded over many years by Kathleen Radford which demonstrate that there was widespread prehistoric activity in the Brassington area (Makepeace



Figure 1 Location map of Curzon Lodge and site plan showing the location of significant features.

2000, 87-99). The collection includes scrapers, arrowheads and knives all found within the vicinity of Curzon Lodge. Two maceheads, believed to be Mesolithic in date, were found near Hoe Grange (SK21955635) just behind Curzon Lodge and also further afield. Mesolithic microliths and a core were also found at Rockhurst Farm (SK 217583) and Pike Hall (SK 194593) (Makepeace 2000, 87-99). A rare flint dagger, likely to be of Beaker period date, was found at Hill Top Farm, Aldwark, approximately 0.5km from Curzon Lodge (Makepeace 2003, 59-62). The Derbyshire Historic Environment Record (HER) records a group of six or more stone axe heads and worked flint as having been discovered 'behind Curzon Lodge' although their exact location in relation to the development site remains unclear (Jones and Brown 2007, 9). The HER also records an additional 31 find sites of probable Neolithic or Bronze Age date with 23 of these being less than 1km away from Curzon Lodge. Included in these are significant sites such as the Neolithic chambered tomb at Harborough Rocks (SMR2451) which is clearly visible from the development area, three Bronze Age barrows (SMR 2464, 2466, 2467) and burial and settlement evidence at Rains Cave, west of Longcliffe (SMR 3476) (Jones and Brown 2007, 10).

RESULTS

Topographic survey and geophysical survey

The earthwork and geophysical surveys did not identify any archaeological features or potential areas of activity other than those identified in the original walkover survey by Trent and Peak Archaeology (Jones and Brown 2007). These comprised four modern 'stone-getting' pits, infilled with modern debris such as brick and tile and modern linear trackways, as well as geophysical anomalies indicative of cultivation.

Test-pits and evaluation trenching

Twenty-two of the 83 test pits were found to contain artefacts within the topsoil. These varied from prehistoric chipped stone tools to modern pottery sherds. A small part of the assemblage included Mesolithic and Early Neolithic flint artefacts recovered from the area around the top and middle of the slope in Fields A and C. Further Neolithic artefacts were recovered from across the site but with a concentration at the base of the slope in Field B. During the evaluation trenching three features, two in Field A and one in Field B were revealed (Fig.

1). A circular feature (014) was uncovered at the northern end of Trench 2 in Field A. The feature measured 0.46m in diameter and was 0.08m deep (Fig. 2). The fill consisted of a mid-brown (7.5 YR 5/4) silty-clay with a spread of charcoal at the centre and no sign of in-situ burning. An undiagnostic flint flake was located within the fill at the western end of the feature. A second feature (016) was uncovered at the southern end of Trench 4 in Field A. The feature measured 0.62m by 0.68m and was 0.07m deep (Fig. 2) with a silty-clay orange – grey/brown (2.5 YR 5/4) fill. No finds were recovered from this feature. The third feature (018) was uncovered at the north end of Trench 10 in Field B and measured 0.54m by 0.6m and was 0.15m deep. The fill consisted of a mid-brown (10 YR 4/4) silty-clay that contained charcoal. The fill also contained two sherds of Early Neolithic Carinated Bowl ceramics, two parallel-sided blades and some burnt daub, the latter suggestive of a structural feature.

Area excavation

The stratigraphy of the site consisted of turf (001) and topsoil (002) above a fine brown/orange (7.5 YR 3/3) silty-clay (003) subsoil, or in other areas the turf and topsoil rested directly upon limestone bedrock. All of the features identified were cut into the subsoil deposit with no trace of them surviving in the topsoil horizon. A total of four archaeological features were found, all of which comprised the heavily truncated basal layer of what had originally been fairly deeply cut features..

Field A

Only a small area of Field A was stripped as the bedrock was encountered almost immediately below the ground surface throughout this field. A small area (0.07ha) of exposed subsoil was cleaned but no archaeological features, buried land surfaces or small finds were identified.

Field B

An area extending to 1.3ha of till was exposed in Field B. The field, which sloped steeply down from west to east had bedrock lying very close to the surface across the western side of the hillslope. To the eastern side of the field a veneer of till overlay the bedrock. This till deposit, due to the nature of the local topography and drainage patterns across the hillslope, became increasingly waterlogged across its northern extent. At the southern end of the field, on an area of slightly higher, drier ground, a group of three archaeological features (103, 105 and 107) was

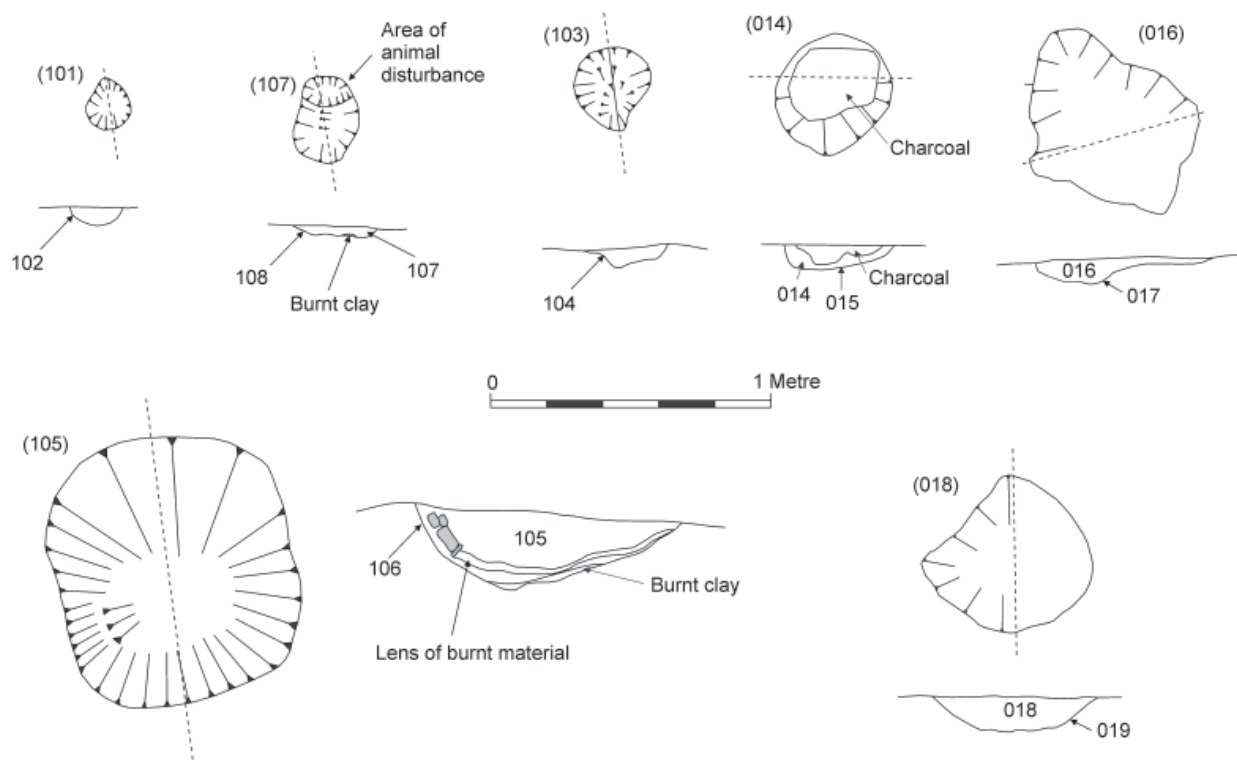


Figure 2 Plans and sections of features excavated at Curzon Lodge.

Laboratory Number	Feature Number	Material	Radiocarbon Age (BP)	$\delta^{13}C$	Calibrated date range (95% confidence)
SUERC-27285 (GU-20815)	F105	Charcoal : Hazelnut shell	4680 \pm 30	-23.6 ‰	3340-3080 cal BC or 3060-3020 cal BC
SUERC-27289 (GU-20816)	F105	Charcoal : Salix/Poplar	4480 \pm 30	-22.9 ‰	3630-3600 cal BC or 3530-3360 cal BC
SUERC-27290 (GU-20817)	F107	Charcoal : Hazel	4520 \pm 30	-25.1 ‰	3360-3260 cal BC or 3250-3100 cal BC
SUERC-27291 (GU-20818)	F107	Charcoal : Cereal grain	4570 \pm 30	-26.6 ‰	3500-3460 cal BC or 3380-3310 cal BC or 3240-3100 cal BC

Table 1. Radiocarbon dates from Curzon Lodge.

found. A fourth feature (101) was located around 100m to the north of this group.

Feature (101) was sub-circular in plan and very shallow measuring 0.19 by 0.15m across and 0.06m in depth (Fig. 2). The fill consisted of a fine textured, dark brown/black (7.5yr 2.5/1) silty-clay with some small angular stone inclusions. The cut of the feature had quite steep sides and a bowl-shaped base. No artefacts were recovered from within the feature. Flotation of the fill revealed that it contained a small

amount of indeterminate charcoal but no botanical macrofossils.

Feature (103) was sub-circular in plan also very shallow, measuring 0.3 by 0.31m across with a depth of 0.08m (Fig. 2). The fill had a fine texture and was a dark brown/black (7.5yr 2.5/1) silty-clay with some small stone inclusions. The feature's cut was irregular and had unevenly sloping sides with the deepest part of the feature being at the southern end. No artefacts were recovered but the feature did contain

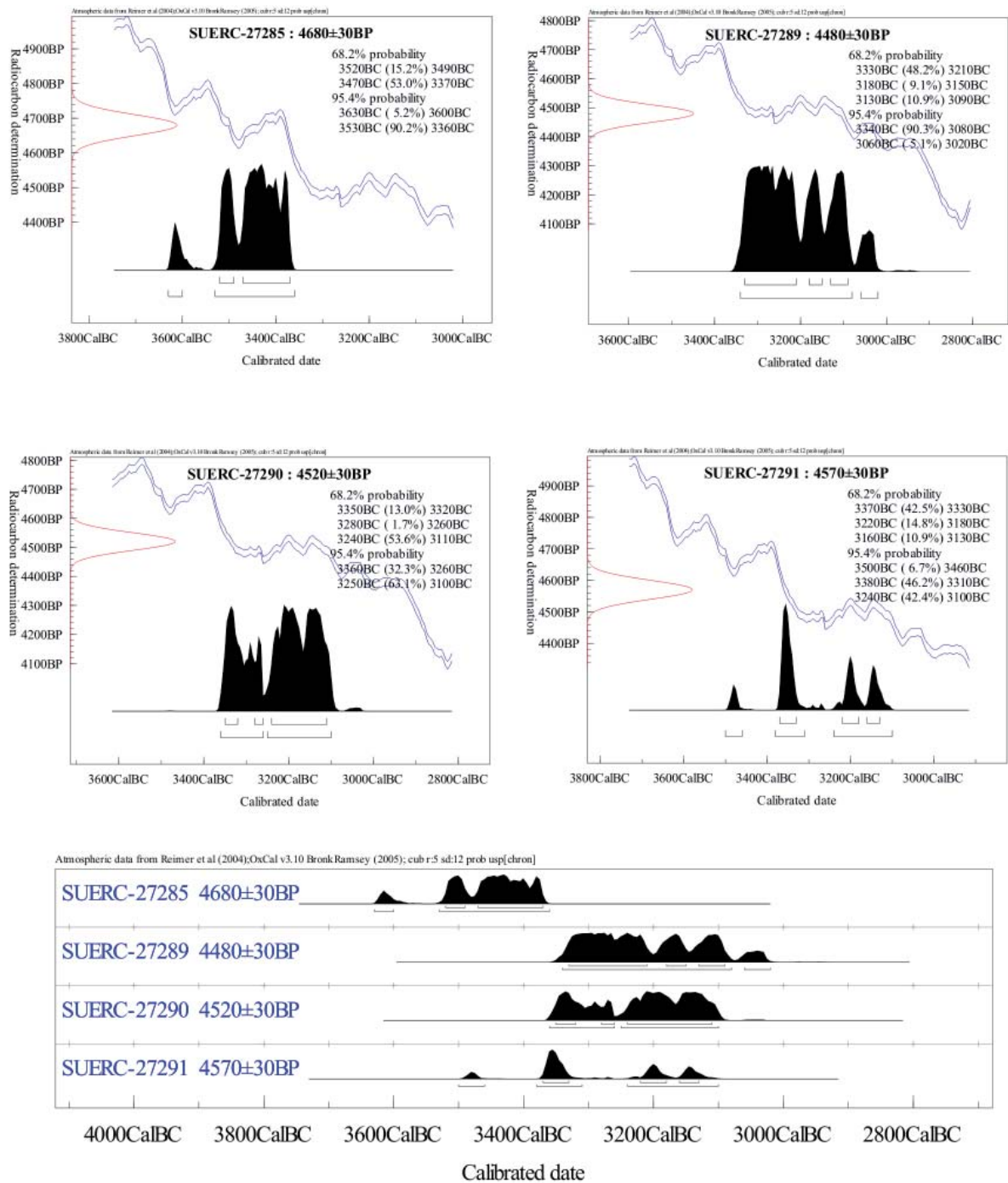


Figure 3 Probability distributions of dates from Curzon Lodge. Each distribution represents the relative probability that an event occurred at a particular time. These distributions are the result of simple radiocarbon calibration.

a limited amount of charred wood of indeterminate type.

Feature (105) was the largest of the surviving features encountered on the site measuring 1.3 by 0.84m across and 0.29 m in depth (Fig. 2). The feature was sub-rectangular in shape with rounded corners. The fill had a fine burnt texture and was a dark brown/black (7.5yr 2.5/1) clay-silt with large angular stone inclusions. The southern side of the cut was slightly steeper than the northern side and the base of the feature was off-centre towards the south. The clay on the base of the feature was fire-reddened (2.5yr 5/6) indicating that there had been in-situ burning suggesting that this feature represents the highly truncated remains of a hearth pit. Charcoal samples were recovered from the fill and analysis of the botanical macrofossils recovered from flotation revealed limited evidence for cereal cultivation, comprising two indeterminate cereal grains, as well as probable harvesting of wild resources, as shown by the presence of two fragments of hazelnut shell. A total of five flints were found within the fill of the feature, one of which had diagnostic Mesolithic characteristics and is likely to be residual given the radiocarbon dates returned from this feature and the presence of cereal grains. The large stones found within the fill of (105) did not show obvious signs of being burnt so it may be that they were deposited in the hearth as backfill after it went out of use. Two radiocarbon determinations were obtained from charcoal within the fill of the hearth-pit. The first, on a piece of hazelnut shell, dated from 3340 to 3020 cal BC at 95.4% probability (4480 ± 30 BP, SUERC 27289) and the second, on a piece of *Salix*/poplar (willow or poplar) dated from 3630 to 3600 cal BC at 95.4% probability (4680 ± 30 BP, SUERC 27285). The two measurements from (105) are not statistically consistent ($T^* = 22.2$; $\nu = 1$; $T^*(5\%) = 3.8$; Ward and Wilson 1978) and represent material of different ages. The hazelnut shell, because of its short lived nature, is considered to be the more accurate of the two dates and the earlier date on the charred wood sample is therefore likely to be due to an old wood offset.

Feature (107) was sub-rectangular in plan and measured 0.63 by 0.6 m across with a maximum depth of 0.05 m (Fig. 2). The fill had a fine texture and was a black (7.5yr 2.5/1) clay-silt with no inclusions. There was a pocket of burnt clay on the base of the cut indicating in situ burning and charcoal samples were recovered from the fill. Analysis of the botanical macrofossils recovered from flotation also showed very limited evidence for cereal cultivation, com-

prising one indeterminate cereal grain. No material culture was recovered from this context. Two radiocarbon determinations were obtained from the fill of the hearth-pit. The first, on a piece of charred hazel, a shortlived species, dated from 3360 to 3100 cal BC at 95.4% probability (4520 ± 30 BP, SUERC 27290) and the second, on a single indeterminate cereal grain, dating from 3500 to 3100 cal BC at 95.4% probability (4570 ± 30 BP, SUERC 27291). The two measurements from (107) are statistically consistent ($T^* = 1.4$; $\nu = 1$; $T^*(5\%) = 3.8$; Ward and Wilson 1978) and could therefore be of the same actual age.

Field C

Only a small area of Field C was stripped before a live electrical cable was encountered. Due to the hazards associated with exposed electrical cabling no further topsoil stripping occurred in this area, but a topsoil strip will be carried out at a later date. The area stripped in Field C, as in Field B, consisted of a topsoil layer immediately overlying limestone bedrock with no archaeological features evident in the area stripped.

SPECIALIST ANALYSES

Ceramics

Clive Waddington

Three pieces of ceramic material were recovered from feature (018) in Trench 10, Field B, comprising:

1. A small body sherd from a vessel with a slack shoulder or carination. It has broken along a coil line indicating its method of construction. The fabric consists of a reddened, burnished outer surface which is pitted due to the burning out of organic inclusions or perhaps the dissolving of crushed limestone inclusions. The core and interior of the vessel is dark grey with a burnished inner surface. The sherd measures 9mm thick and contains small crushed stone inclusions measuring up to 2.5mm across. This is a fragment from a well-made vessel that is likely to belong to the Carinated Bowl Early Neolithic tradition.
2. A small body sherd with a slight outward-turning profile indicating the presence of a slack shoulder or carination. It has broken along a coil line indicating its method of construction. This sherd belongs to an entirely different vessel than sherd 1, having been more highly burnished and having a much thinner fabric. Both the inner and outer surfaces are lightly pitted indicating the burning out of organic inclu-

sions or the dissolving of crushed limestone inclusions. The fabric of the vessel is dark brown with a burnished inner surface. The sherd measures 4mm thick. This is a fragment from a well-made vessel of the Early Neolithic Carinated Bowl tradition.

3. A small lump of what appears to be burnt clay or daub found in the same pit that produced Early Neolithic pottery and a Neolithic period flint blade. The presence of daub hints at the presence of some sort of structure close to, or around, this pit.

Find No.	Context	Colour	Provenance	Type	Core Red. Seq.	Period	Length (mm)	Width (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Notes
1	Test pit 03A	Light grey		Flake	Sec	-				Broken. Bifacial, edge-trimmed, indicative of Neolithic or Bronze Age flaking techniques
2	Test pit 04A	Light grey	Glacial or nodular	Blade	Sec	Late Mes/ Early Neo	31	10.5	2.5	Parallel-sided
3	Test pit 07A	Medium grey		Pyramidal core	Pri	Late Mes		24	17	Small exhausted pyramidal core from narrow-blade microlith production
4	Test pit 23A	Brown-grey	Nodular	Blade	Sec	Late Mes/ Early Neo	37	13	8	Narrow, parallel-sided, edge trimmed
5	Test pit 50B	Light grey		Flake	Sec					Undiagnostic
6	Test pit 53B	Brown-grey	Nodular	Blade	Sec	Early Neolithic	48	18	8	Pristine, unutilised blank
7	Test pit 54B	Dark grey		Blade?	Sec					Broken, undiagnostic
8	Test pit 54B	Brown grey		Flake	Sec					Broken, undiagnostic
9	Test pit 63B	Brown-grey	Nodular or glacial	Blade	Sec					Broken, undiagnostic
10	Test pit 21A	Medium-grey		Flake	Sec					Broken, undiagnostic
11	Test pit 62B	Light grey		Flake	Sec		18.5	18	4	Undiagnostic
12	Trench 1	Patinated		Blade	Ter		34	16.5	7	Parallel-sided with utilisation along one edge. Possible awl.
13	Trench 1	Brown-grey		Bladelet	Sec	Mes?				Broken
14	Trench 11	Brown-grey		Flake	Sec					Broken, undiagnostic
15	Trench 13	Patinated		Blade	Sec					Large, patinated, broken, edge-trimmed blade tool. The broken edge is also patinated indicating it was broken in antiquity.
16	014	Patinated/ burnt?		Flake	Sec					Broken, undiagnostic
17	016	Light-grey		Bladelet	Sec	Late Mes/ Early Neo	11	13	3	Broken parallel-sided bladelet with triangular cross section
18	018	Patinated		Blade	Sec	Early Neo	52	18	8	Parallel-sided with sharp point at distal end.

Table 2 Lithic material from Curzon Lodge test pits and evaluation trenches.

Find No.	Context	Colour	Provenance	Type	Core Red. Seq.	Period	Length (mm)	Width (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Notes
1	105	Light grey	Glacial	Flake	Sec		27	17.5	14	
2	105	Light grey		Flake	Sec					Broken
3	105	White	Glacial	Flake	Sec	Mes?				Broken and patinated
4	105	White	Glacial	Flake (core fragment)	Sec	Mes				Microblade scar on dorsal side where previous blade detachment made when this piece was part of a core
5	105	White		Chip	Sec		7.6	6.5	2.5	

Table 3 Lithic material from Curzon Lodge open area excavation.

Lithics

Clive Waddington

A small lithic assemblage totalling 23 pieces was recovered from the site. These include 18 pieces from the test pitting and evaluation trenching and five pieces from the area excavation.

Insofar as dating goes, this assemblage of lithic material has chronologically diagnostic pieces that can be identified with certainty to both the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods. A good example of a Mesolithic piece is the pyramidal core (3) from test pit 07A towards the top of the slope, whilst good examples of Neolithic material include the blades (18 and 6) from the pit (context 018) in evaluation Trench 10 and that from test pit 53B nearby. Both are situated towards the base of the slope and Early Neolithic ceramics belonging to the Carinated Bowl tradition were found in the same pit as the flint blade (18). Bearing in mind the previous discoveries of Mesolithic and Neolithic flints in the Longcliffe area (Makepeace 2000; 2003) the lithic assemblage from the Curzon Lodge development site documents activity in this locale during the Stone Age from both the Mesolithic and the Neolithic. The very limited size of the assemblage does not allow for much to be said in relation to the types of activities represented by these pieces, although the presence of a Mesolithic core and debitage suggests the production of microliths for hunting weapons by Mesolithic hunters, and the presence of a variety of blade forms with evidence for utilization suggests that Neolithic farmers were undertaking a range of processing tasks associated with settlement-based activities.

Botanical Macrofossils

Ben Johnson

A total of four environmental samples were recovered from the Curzon Lodge excavation. The bulk samples, of varying volumes (from 2 to 40 litres), were sieved to 500 microns. Notes on the matrix, and scores for cereals, chaff, weeds and other botanical residues such as charred hazelnut shells are presented in Table 4. Bracketed numbers within the table represent relative abundance in each sample from (1), very little, through to (5), very abundant. Unbracketed numbers are actual counts for each item.

The samples contain little material other than small fragments of charred wood, although two of the samples contain charred hazelnut shell fragments and probable cereal grains. The fragments are generally very small, abraded and represent the total numbers of plant macrofossils from each sample. The content of most samples was almost entirely charcoal, with a degree of modern root and seed material. The quantity of modern intrusions varied from sample to sample and is presented in Table 4. There was a mixture of taxa present in the charcoal although the material was predominantly chunks of heartwood with very few sections of small roundwood. Almost no weed seeds were noted, and very few charred hazelnut shell fragments, cereal grains or other significant macrofossils were noted, although the presence of at least one Neolithic cereal grain (see radiocarbon results quoted above) is significant as it confirms the presence of crop cultivation in the later 4th Millennium cal BC in this area.

The Curzon Lodge environmental samples add a small amount of environmental contextual data to the existing corpus of information from the area. Pit (103) contained material that appears to have been

Context no.	Sample no	Description	Total bulk volume (L)	Flot. sample (ml)	Content and notes	Cereal	Chaff	Weed	Other
101	1	Truncated posthole	2	20	Highly abraded charcoal, no piece greater than 3mm (5), mixed taxa, modern root and seed (1)	0	0	(1)	0
103	2	Truncated pit	4	<5	Highly abraded charcoal (3), modern root (5)	0	0	0	0
105	4	Truncated hearth	40	150	Large fragments of well preserved mixed taxa charcoal (3), modern root fragments (5), modern weed seeds (1)	2 – indet, poss Hordeum	0	(1)	2 small fragments of hazelnut shell
107	3	Truncated hearth	10	75	Relatively unabraded but small charcoal fragments of mixed taxa (5), some modern root and seed (2)	1 – indet, poss Hordeum	0	1 – Poaceae?	0

Table 4 Environmental samples from Curzon Lodge.

moved prior to burial, given the abraded nature of the charcoal, whereas the hearth-pits do not contain abraded material which would indicate the material has either been burnt in situ or has been deposited within the feature immediately after the burning event. The very limited number of indeterminate cereal grains (which are considered more likely to be *Hordeum* (barley) than *Triticum* (wheat) although this is tentative), and equally limited number of hazelnut shell fragments, probably indicate their use as foodstuffs, rather than fortuitous inclusion. Given that only the basal layer of the features survived their quantities cannot be used as a measure of the intensity of settlement and agricultural activity, rather they can simply be used to confirm the presence of Neolithic occupation on and around the site and the exploitation of domestic cereals as well as gathered plant foods.

DISCUSSION

It is thought that the five features located in the southern section of Field B reported here represent two Neolithic 'midden' pits, a possible posthole and two hearth-pits, all of which are consistent with the remnants of Neolithic settlement activity. The features have been highly truncated by subsequent agricultural activity and the interpretation of the features, other than the hearth-pits with their clear evidence for in-situ burning, can only be tentative. Feature (101) may be the heavily truncated remains of a posthole, given its shape and surviving dimensions, as well as the very small amount of abraded charcoal and lack of artefacts recovered from its fill. It is possible that it was originally associated with other postholes, evidence for which has been destroyed by more recent agricultural activity. The

presence of daub in this context also suggests the presence of a post-built structure with daub walling. Feature (018) is considered to have been a truncated domestic rubbish or 'midden' pit, as it contained charred material, a chipped lithic and two pieces of broken Carinated Bowl. Feature (103) may have been a midden pit, now heavily truncated, containing material from a hearth, given the fact that it produced abraded burnt material. The lack of evidence of in situ burning and the heavily abraded nature of the charcoal, which indicates it was moved around prior to deposition, reinforce this interpretation, although the limited volume of material and lack of artefactual evidence makes it tentative. Features (105) and (107) are considered to have been hearth-pits, given the abundant charcoal and clear evidence for in-situ burning shown by the fire-reddened clay around their base. They may have formed the nucleus of activity on the site, which may have been small-scale in nature, as no evidence of structural remains was revealed nearby and there was little material culture or environmental remains recovered. However, given the heavily truncated nature of the archaeological remains on the site it is likely that other features have been destroyed by previous agricultural activity and the area of settlement could potentially have been larger. It may have included features (014 and 016) located higher up the hill-slope, although the absence of material culture other than one late Mesolithic or Early Neolithic blade, coupled with the heavily truncated nature of the remains, can only remain speculative. The distribution of Neolithic flints recovered from within the topsoil also suggests extensive Neolithic activity across this area, or repeat visits to the locale over many years, as the flints will have been ploughed out from Neolithic features which have been destroyed by subsequent ploughing,

leaving only the basal deposits of the few features to survive on the site.

The radiocarbon determinations place the activity at the site in the Early Neolithic period, around the last quarter of the 4th millennium cal BC, as indicated by the radiocarbon dates from three short-lived single entity samples. The slightly earlier date from a piece of willow or poplar wood may reflect an “old wood” offset due to the sample already being old when the wood was burnt and incorporated into the hearth pit fill. However, if the date from this sample is excluded the remaining three measurements are statistically consistent ($T^* = 4.5$; $v = 2$; $T^*(5\%) = 6.0$; Ward and Wilson 1978) and could therefore be of the same actual age. The radiocarbon dates from both [105] and [107] are therefore considered to be associated with a phase of settlement activity in the latter part of the fourth millennium cal BC. The presence of Carinated Bowl ceramics in pit [018] to the east of the hearth pits suggests that Neolithic occupation on the site also includes activity from the first half to mid 4th millennium cal BC as this type of Neolithic pottery is now well established as being an early-mid 4th millennium cal BC ceramic tradition.

Whilst no diagnostic Neolithic flints were recovered from any of the features at the base of the slope in Field B, lithics dating to the Neolithic were recovered from test pits in the vicinity of these features. A diagnostic Neolithic blade was also recovered from one feature at the top of the slope in Field A. This appears to indicate foci of Neolithic activity on the flatter parts of the site at both the top and the base of the slope. The almost complete truncation of archaeological features by the plough has meant that all features within the topsoil horizon have been destroyed and the only evidence left from such features are the virtually indestructible flint tools. This reinforces the need to evaluate the topsoil of archaeological sites prior to development, as it may be that the only surviving evidence of past human activity is present within this layer, particularly in upland locales where the topsoil cover can be very thin and agricultural activity rapidly destroys underlying archaeological features.

The limited botanical macrofossil evidence recovered from the hearth pits hints at both domestic cereal cultivation and harvesting of wild resources, and the Neolithic date on one of the cereal grains provides a useful addition to the corpus of direct dates for cereal agriculture in the region.

The features excavated at Curzon Lodge are interpreted as most likely being the remains of small-

scale late 4th millennium cal BC Neolithic settlement activity, given the small number of archaeological features in the area and the limited number of artefacts and environmental remains associated with them. However, the heavily truncated nature of the surviving features means that other archaeological deposits, including possible structural evidence as suggested by the presence of daub and the posthole, could have been destroyed and more widespread settlement could still have been possible, based on the distribution of Neolithic lithics from across the site and the high number of findspots known in the vicinity. Whether large formal rectangular buildings once existed, as has been evidenced elsewhere on the limestone at Lismore Fields near Buxton (Garton 1991), remains unknown, but the wealth of Neolithic finds known from the Longcliffe area suggests the area around Longcliffe and Brassington formed an important locale around which 4th millennium cal BC Neolithic settlement was clustered. The presence of domestic pottery, chipped flints and limited cereal grains suggests the site was probably associated with domestic settlement activities.

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