

**Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Report
Blaise Farm Quarry, Offham
Kent**

**NGR: 566127 155854
TQ 6612 5584**

**ASE Project No: 170319
Site Code: BFQ17**

**ASE Report No: 2017222
OASIS ID: archaeol6-285116**



By Naomi Humphreys

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Date of Issue:	May 2017		
Revision:	2		

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Abstract

This report presents the results of an archaeological strip, map and sample undertaken by Archaeology South-East at Blaise Farm Quarry, Offham, Kent between 2nd and 12th May 2017. The fieldwork was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd on behalf of Hanson UK/ Gallagher Group ahead of plans to continue with a long-phased program of ragstone quarrying.

Ground reduction of an area c. 126 x 110m was monitored to a depth of c.0.30m whereupon the natural geological head deposit was exposed. No archaeological deposits, features or finds were recorded.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd, on behalf of Hanson UK/ Gallagher Group, to undertake an archaeological strip, map and sample ahead of proposed quarrying of ragstone at Blaise Farm Quarry, Offham, Kent, hereafter referred to as 'the site' (centred on NGR 566127 155854; Figure 1).

1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 The site is situated in the parish of Offham and lies to the south west of Offham Village. It is bounded by Comp Lane to the north, King Hill to the east, Mereworth Woods to the south and Seven Mile Lane to the west. The affected area of the site comprises of a c. 262m x 210m rectangular parcel of land which gently slopes down towards the north-east. The centre of the site sits at c.105m AOD.
- 1.2.2 The underlying solid geology of the site is mapped by the British Geological Survey (BGS) as Hythe Formation (alternating sandy limestones and glauconitic sandy mudstones) with overlying superficial deposits of head (clay, silt, sand and gravel; BGS 2017).

1.3 Planning Background

- 1.3.1 The scheme comprises archaeological monitoring of ground reduction in association with a long term phased programme of aggregate extraction and reinstatement.
- 1.3.2 Following consultation between ASE and CgMs, a Written Scheme of Investigation for the strip, map and sample (ASE 2017) was submitted to the KCC Archaeologist in advance of fieldwork commencing. This document was prepared in accordance with the KCC Standard Specification for Strip Map and Sample (KCC 2015) and with the relevant Standards and Guidance of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2017).

1.4 Aims and Objectives

- 1.4.1 The broad aims of the strip, map and sample were:
- To determine the presence or absence of archaeological remains on site
 - To assess the character, extent, preservation, significance, date and quality of any remains and deposits
 - To assess how they might be affected by the development of the site
 - To establish the extent to which previous groundworks and/or other processes have affected archaeological deposits at the site

1.4.2 In addition, the following research aims were drawn from regional frameworks:

- To what extent and in what ways can prehistoric landscapes and their components be understood in the present landscape? (SERF; Johnson et al p1)
- Stone and flint axeheads and "heavy" tools of southern English Neolithic industries are rare in securing prehistoric contexts although widespread in the total record. How can we better understand if this reflects the manner of their use and discard? (English Heritage/Museum of London, 2002)
- Detailed interdisciplinary and contextual study of the transition from medieval to post-medieval, in order to generate a better understanding of the effect (or lack of it) of dissolution and reformation across society. (SERF; Weeks, Q32)

1.5 Scope of the report

1.5.1 This report details the results of the archaeological strip, map and sample which took place between the 2nd and 12th May 2017.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Overview

- 2.1.1 The information presented below has been taken directly from the Written Scheme of Investigation (ASE 2017) document prepared prior to the commencement of the project.
- 2.1.2 The site lies approximately 1km SSE of Offham, west of Mereworth Woods, at a height of 105m AOD; the underlying geology is Hythe formation sandstone with superficial head deposits.
- 2.1.3 A 1km radius search of the Kent County Council Historic Environment Record (KCC HER) centred on NGR 565984 157112 identified numerous entries covering all periods. Table 1 summarises the archaeological data from the HER (Figure 1). A number of historic buildings, churches and farmsteads of medieval/ post medieval date have been omitted for clarity.

2.2 Palaeolithic

- 2.2.1 Palaeolithic finds have been noted 'at Ryarsh' approximately 870m north-west of the site, since the 1920s (MKE1131).

2.3 Mesolithic

- 2.3.1 Mesolithic flint implements have been found in two clusters near the site, the first group is located c.990m to the north-east, while the second is located just over 1km to the north.

2.4 Neolithic

- 2.4.1 A scattering of flints (MKE1168) was found in 1983 at an unspecified location, somewhere in close proximity to the site. The finds included three incomplete Neolithic flints, two of which were polished. Four scrapers and an unfinished leaf-shaped arrowhead were also found. An incomplete Neolithic polished axe head (MKE75750) was recovered to the west in 2006, and another complete polished axehead (MKE75333) was found c.900m to the north.

2.5 Bronze Age

- 2.5.1 Part of an Early Bronze Age polished stone archer's wristguard or 'bowman's bracer' was found c.900m north-west of the site (MKE75456); such wristguards have been found in Beaker graves dated to circa 2500-2250 cal BC.
- 2.5.2 A Bronze Age copper alloy hoard comprising seven complete socketed axes, two sickle fragments, three spear fragments, two blade fragments and a further objects was found in two parts by a metal detectorist in 2007 and 2009 0.5km to the north of the proposed quarry site (MKE75594 and MKE75798).

2.6 Iron Age

- 2.6.1 A cut, half uniface gold stater was found c.920m north-west of the site (MKE75810), and a copper alloy harness fitting, which may date from the Middle Iron Age to early Roman periods, was found c.1km to the north (MKE80194).

2.7 Roman

- 2.7.1 Finds of Roman date are few and isolated in nature. They include a copper alloy brooch and a coin (MKE1155; MKE75450 and MKE75451).

2.8 Early medieval

- 2.8.1 Two 11th century copper alloy stirrup strap mounts were found approximately 1km to the north of the quarry.

2.9 Medieval

- 2.9.1 The remains of the scheduled 12th century Chapel of St. Blaise is situated c.0.3km to the north of the proposed quarry area (DKE19211).
- 2.9.2 Various medieval metal detector finds have been recovered within the search area (Table 1).

2.10 Undated

- 2.10.1 Located in woodland to the north-east of the site is a rectangular earthwork of unknown date (MKE17759) enclosing an area of about 200 sq m (10 Acres) comprising an internal bank with an outer ditch. These earthworks were surveyed by the Maidstone Archaeological Group in 1976 and partly excavated by KARU in 2000 (KARU 2000).

2.11 Previous archaeological investigation

2.11.1 A watching brief was carried out in June 2000 on land to the north of the site by Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit (KARU 2000). This did not identify any archaeological features. Only a small number of prehistoric worked flints were, however, recovered.

OBJECTID	MonUID	Coordinates	PrefRef	Name	Monument Type	Period Range
6451	MKE36422	TQ 65729 57276	TQ 65 NE 243	QUINTAIN	TILTYARD, SITE, QUINTAIN	Medieval to post medieval
8528	MKE18188	TQ 652 572	TQ 65 NE 97	Offham Ragstone Quarry	MONUMENT	Post medieval to Modern
8103	MKE17759	TQ 6662 5645	TQ 65 NE 92	Earthwork in St Leonards Wood, Offham	DITCH	Undated
55	DKE19254		1005188	The Quintain on the Green	Scheduled monument	Medieval
397	DKE19211		1005488	Chapel of St Blaise	Scheduled monument	Medieval
2869		TQ661 565	EKE5603	Evaluation at Blaise Farm Quarry, Offham	Archaeological Intervention	Prehistoric flint scatter
1109	MKE1131	TQ 66925699	TQ 65 NE 2	Palaeolithic finds in Ryarsh area	FINDSPOT	Palaeolithic
55429	MKE75441	TQ 66800 57500	MKE75441	Mesolithic stone core	FINDSPOT	Early Mesolithic to Early Neolithic
55548	MKE75578	TQ 65900 57900	MKE75578	Mesolithic flint lithic implement	FINDSPOT	Early Mesolithic to Early Neolithic
56087	MKE75638	TQ 66800 57500	MKE75638	Mesolithic flint lithic implement	FINDSPOT	Early Mesolithic to Early Neolithic
56115	MKE75757	TQ 66000 58000	MKE75757	Mesolithic flint lithic implement	FINDSPOT	Early Mesolithic to Early Bronze Age
56116	MKE75758	TQ 66000 58000	MKE75758	Mesolithic flint lithic implement	FINDSPOT	Early Mesolithic to Early Bronze Age
56117	MKE75759	TQ 66000 58000	MKE75759	Mesolithic flint lithic implement	FINDSPOT	Early Mesolithic to Early Bronze Age
56118	MKE75760	TQ 66000 58000	MKE75760	Mesolithic flint lithic implement	FINDSPOT	Early Mesolithic to Early Bronze Age
55404	MKE75333	TQ 65800 57700	MKE75333	Neolithic metamorphic rock polished axehead	FINDSPOT	Neolithic
3075	MKE1168	TQ 660 565	TQ 65 NE 39	Flint scatter and Neolithic axes found near Mereworth	FINDSPOT	Neolithic
55575	MKE75750	TQ 65530 56550	MKE75750	Neolithic flint polished axehead	FINDSPOT	Middle Neolithic to Early Bronze Age
55444	MKE75456	TQ 66800 57500	MKE75456	Bronze Age stone arm guard	FINDSPOT	Late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age
55495	MKE75594	TQ 65980 56880	MKE75594	Bronze Age hoard	FINDSPOT	Bronze Age

OBJECTID	MonUID	Coordinates	PrefRef	Name	Monument Type	Period Range
56132	MKE75798	TQ 65984 56881	MKE75798	Bronze Age copper alloy hoard	FINDSPOT	Late Bronze Age
59190	MKE80194	TQ 66300 57800	MKE80194	Iron Age copper alloy harness fitting	FINDSPOT	Middle Iron Age to Roman
56144	MKE75810	TQ 65800 57700	MKE75810	Iron Age gold coin	FINDSPOT	Late Iron Age
2930	MKE1155	TQ 6556 5747	TQ 65 NE 26	Romano-British jar found at Offham	FINDSPOT	Roman
55439	MKE75451	TQ 65173 56984	MKE75451	Roman copper alloy coin	FINDSPOT	Roman
56162	MKE75938	TQ 65765 58078	MKE75938	copper alloy brooch	FINDSPOT	Roman
55706	MKE75273	TQ 66800 57500	MKE75273	Early Medieval copper alloy stirrup	FINDSPOT	Early Medieval to Medieval
56002	MKE75783	TQ 66800 57600	MKE75783	Early Medieval copper alloy stirrup	FINDSPOT	Early Medieval to Medieval
55438	MKE75450	TQ 65173 56984	MKE75450	Medieval copper alloy seal matrix	FINDSPOT	Medieval
55459	MKE75471	TQ 66000 57000	MKE75471	Medieval lead bulla	FINDSPOT	Medieval
55496	MKE75595	TQ 65900 57900	MKE75595	Medieval silver coin	FINDSPOT	Medieval
55570	MKE75819	TQ 668 574	MKE75819	Medieval silver brooch	FINDSPOT	Medieval
55903	MKE75392	TQ 66300 57900	MKE75392	Medieval silver coin	FINDSPOT	Medieval
56065	MKE75956	TQ 66686 57775	MKE75956	Medieval silver coin	FINDSPOT	Medieval
56125	MKE75791	TQ 65700 58000	MKE75791	Medieval copper alloy harness	FINDSPOT	Medieval
56129	MKE75795	TQ 66900 57500	MKE75795	Medieval pottery vessel	FINDSPOT	Medieval
56155	MKE75931	TQ 66740 57760	MKE75931	Medieval silver coin	FINDSPOT	Medieval
55560	MKE75707	TQ 65800 57900	MKE75707	Post medieval copper alloy coin weight	FINDSPOT	Medieval to post medieval
55853	MKE75411	TQ 66080 57090	MKE75411	Medieval copper alloy scabbard	FINDSPOT	Medieval to post medieval
56165	MKE75941	TQ 66900 57000	MKE75941	copper alloy vessel	FINDSPOT	Medieval to post medieval
55989	MKE75770	TQ 66100 58100	MKE75770	Post medieval copper alloy jetton	FINDSPOT	Post medieval

Table 1: Summary of HER/SMR data

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.1.1 The archaeological methodology was set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (ASE 2017) and all work was carried out in accordance with this document.
- 3.1.2 Topsoil was stripped down to the natural head deposit with all ground reduction undertaken under archaeological supervision using a 13-tonne 360° mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket.
- 3.1.3 Any potential archaeological features were investigated by hand.
- 3.1.4 Spoil heaps were also examined to recover and collect any unstratified finds.
- 3.1.5 A written record of all exposed deposits was kept as was a digital photographic record of the work.

3.2 Fieldwork Constraints

- 3.2.1 Upon arrival of ASE archaeologists to the site in early May 2017 it was found that in the north-western corner some of the area proposed for the strip, map and sample exercise in the WSI (ASE 2017; Fig 2) had already been topsoil stripped to a level consistent with the area subsequently investigated. On arrival this area was formally investigated as part of the programme of works and was established as being archaeologically sterile.
- 3.2.2 There were no other constraints to the fieldwork.

3.3 The Site Archive

- 3.3.1 The site archive has been assembled in accordance with the guidelines set out in Historic England's Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (HE 2015) and in accordance with the guidelines published in Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage (UKIC 1990) and Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections (Museums and Galleries Commission 1994).
- 3.3.2 The archive is currently held at the Archaeology South-East offices in Portslade, and will be offered to a suitable museum in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Context sheets	2
Section sheets	0
Plans sheets	0
Colour photographs	0
B&W photos	0
Digital photos	18
Context register	1
Drawing register	0
Day observation forms	8
Trench Record forms	0

Table 2: Quantification of site paper archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Ground reduction

- 4.1.1 Ground reduction was monitored between the 2nd and 12th May 2017.
- 4.1.2 Each visit consistently confirmed a stratigraphic sequence of natural ragstone head deposit directly overlain by a 0.10 - 0.30m layer of weathered topsoil.
- 4.1.3 In areas, the natural head deposit was heavily affected by rooting and a number of tree-throws were observed and investigated.
- 4.1.4 No archaeological deposits, features or finds were recorded.

Context	Type	Interpretation	Deposit Thickness (m)	Description
01	Layer	Topsoil	0.10-0.30	Light grey-brown sandy silt with irregular ragstone inclusions.
02	Layer	Natural geology (mixed head deposit)	N/A	Mid orange-yellow mixed deposit of sand, silt and clay.

Table 4: List of recorded contexts

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Overview of stratigraphic sequence

- 5.1.1 Across the site a sequence of natural ragstone head deposit directly overlain by a 0.10 - 0.30m layer of weathered topsoil was observed.
- 5.1.2 No archaeological deposits, features or finds were recorded.

5.2 Deposit survival and existing impacts

- 5.2.1 No subsoil horizon was observed anywhere across the site.

5.3 Consideration of research aims

- 5.3.1 The strip, map and sample was successful in its broad aims by determining that no archaeological remains were present on the site and therefore establishing that the continuation of ground reduction at this location will have no further archaeological impact.
- 5.3.2 No archaeological deposits, finds or features were observed during the strip, map and sample and therefore no comments can be made regarding any of the research aims.

5.4 Conclusions

- 5.4.1 An area of c.126m x 110m of ground reduction was monitored to a depth of c.0.30m whereupon the natural geological head deposit was exposed. No archaeological deposits, features or finds were recorded.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank CgMs Consulting Ltd. for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project, and Wendy Rogers County Archaeologist Kent County Council for her guidance and monitoring. The fieldwork was undertaken by Rob Cullum, Lucy May and Jake Wilson. Jon Sygrave managed the excavations, Jim Stevenson and Dan Swift the post-excavation process.

HER Summary

Site code	BFQ17				
Project code	170319				
Planning reference	-				
Site address	Blaise Farm Quarry, Offham, Kent				
District/Borough					
NGR (12 figures)	566127 155854				
Geology	Hythe Formation (alternating sandy limestones and glauconitic sandy mudstones) with overlying superficial deposits of Head (clay, silt, sand and gravel).				
Fieldwork type			WB		
Date of fieldwork	2 nd – 12 th May 2017				
Sponsor/client	CgMs Consulting Ltd.				
Project manager	Jon Sygrave				
Project supervisor	Rob Cullum, Lucy May, Jake Wilson				
Period summary	None				
Project summary	An archaeological strip, map and sample was undertaken at Blaise Farm Quarry, Offham, Kent, between the 2 nd and 12 th May 2017. Ground reduction of an area c. 126 x 110m was monitored to a depth of c.0.30m whereupon the natural geological head deposit was exposed. No archaeological deposits, features or finds recorded.				

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-285116

Project details

Project name	Blaise Farm Quarry, Offham, Kent
Short description of the project	An archaeological strip, map and sample was undertaken at Blaise Farm Quarry, Offham, Kent, between the 2nd and 12th May 2017. Ground reduction of an area c. 126 x 110m was monitored to a depth of c.0.30m whereupon the natural geological head deposit was exposed. No archaeological deposits, features or finds recorded.
Project dates	Start: 02-05-2017 End: 12-05-2017
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	BFQ17 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Grassland Heathland 1 - Heathland
Investigation type	"strip, map and sample"
Prompt	advice from HCG KCC
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	KENT TONBRIDGE AND MALLING OFFHAM Blaise Farm Quarry
Postcode	ME19 4PN
Study area	14000 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 6612 5585 51.276995014454 0.381995866813 51 16 37 N 000 22 55 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 104.7m Max: 104.9m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Archaeology South-East
Project design originator	Kent County Council Heritage Conservation Group
Project director/manager	Jon Sygrave
Project supervisor	Jake Wilson
Type of sponsor/funding body	client
Name of sponsor/funding body	Hanson UK/ Gallagher Group
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Local Museum

Digital Archive ID	BFQ17
Digital Media available	"Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Local Museum
Paper Archive ID	BFQ17
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Miscellaneous Material", "Report"
Project bibliography	
1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological strip, map and sample Report, Blaise Farm Quarry, Offham, Kent
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Humphreys, N
Other bibliographic details	ASE Report No: 2017222
Date	2017
Issuer or publisher	ASE
Place of issue or publication	Portslade
Description	grey lit rep
Entered by	Dan Swift (d.swift@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on	16 May 2017





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© Archaeology South-East		Blaise Farm Quarry, Offham	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 170319	May 2017	Monitored area	
Report Ref: 2017222	Drawn by: NH		







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