

Exhibition Guide



Field Walking

An exhibition of flint fieldwalking finds & art
inspired by walking the landscape

Field Walking



In 2023, Will Chester-Master, one of the custodians of Abbey Home Farm approached the museum to display field walking flint finds in the temporary exhibition space; inspired by the success of Art and Archaeology of Belas Knap Long barrow exhibition by Elizabeth Poraj-Wilczynska the year before. The proposition developed into an exhibition featuring artists' responses to the landscape from which the flint came.

The Corinium Museum is delighted to show our visitors part of the farm's museum of field finds. This exhibition guide accompanies the art work exhibited alongside them. The museum was pleased to facilitate this collaboration between Will Chester-Master and Ruth Broadbent, Valerie Coffin Price, Andy Freedman, and Caroline Morris.

The artists have collaborated with Will and the landscape of Abbey Home Farm. All four are associates of Walking the Land*, and as the name implies, they have walked the landscape to create the work on display here. They have been inspired by the history, nature, the ethos of the farm.

If you would like to fieldwalk, permission must be obtained from the landowner prior to fieldwalking.





About 15 years ago Professor Tim Darvill started taking an interest in a Neolithic long barrow on the farm and it was around that time we first had a conversation about fieldwalking . Having dug Victorian bottle dumps in the 1970s this seemed a much less arduous albeit not as glamorous way of looking for relics of the past .

Weekend winter days with low or no sun was when I started walking across fields on the farm - feeling the soil types change underfoot was an adventure in itself .

It wasn't long before my eyes got used to alien flint flakes in amongst our Cotswold brash and when Tim visited I would usually have a bag to show him for identification .

Recognising worked pieces is an ongoing process with the workmanship on the flint ranging from crude to truly remarkable . Finding that first arrowhead in Coneygars , untouched by human hand since Neolithic times , was a memorable moment . Walking across the land staring at the ground is not for everyone but is great free therapy in our hectic world . Who knows you might just pick up that 6000 year old stone axe that's waiting to be found!

Do ask the farmer first before you start walking across his or her fields - you'll find most of them are interested in history and they definitely know when no damage will be caused to the ground or the crop.

Will Chester-Master





Abbey Home Farm: the Historical Inspiration

The land that the Chester-Master's manage carries the traces of many thousands of years of history.

The flints in this exhibition have come from fields across the farm, and continue to come up in the plough soils. Flints are not naturally found in this area. The flint arrowheads, knives and scrapers found across many of the farm's fields indicate activity on the land since the Neolithic.

It may be unsurprising that there is evidence of Romano British activity. The Fosse Way runs through the middle of the farm and came into Corinium at Verulanium Gate having merged with Akeman street, which also crosses the family's land. A large quantity of Roman pottery fragments collected on the surface of one of the fields is a clear indicator of a farmstead site.

The name of the farm is clue to it's next layer of historical significance, Abbey. This name comes from the Augustine Abbey of St Mary's which dominated Cirencester and its district from 1130's to its dissolution in 1539. This abbey owned extensive lands to the north of Cirencester and all the land now owned by the Bathurst Estate, and much more besides.

The hamlet of Wiggold, within the farm, also has Medieval origins. We know that there was a Lady of the Manor of Wiggold, who endowed St Lawrence's leper hospital in Gloucester Street. Wiggold also has cropmarks & earthworks of medieval ridge and furrow, trackways, settlement, terraces, field boundaries, water channels and field working.

Most of the woods on the farm were planted in the 1820's by Jane Master.

The Midland & Southwestern Railway crossed the farm in 1883 connecting Cirencester to Cheltenham and down to Southampton. The last train went through in 1961 and in 1966 the line was sold back to the family. In 1996 the Cirencester 'bypass' (A417) was built across part of the farm, carving through its history.



Will and Hilary Chester-Master took over the management of the farm and made a conversion to an organic system. Local food, biodiversity and public engagement are a key part of the ethos.



Ruth Broadbent

fieldwalking / groundlines

72 drawings inspired by walking the landscape
where many of the flints were discovered

2024

The idea of making Groundlines drawings (7x7cm, pencil on paper) for this exhibition came about in visits to the farm earlier this year. I felt the need to understand not only the layout of the farm itself, but also the processes of Will's flint collecting and the way in which he orders, labels and presents them in the barn.

The map of the farm with its handwritten field names became integral to the project. For each drawing, I took inspiration from Will's system of mapping and labelling, using the field names instead of exact geolocation (although I recorded the precise location, I did not include this on the drawings).

As the project progressed, I allowed for some fields having no drawings and others more, reflecting the full tins of flints for some fields and none for others. I also wanted to find a way to include the numbering system of hectares used on the map. I decided to include altitude for my system of numbering as a way to map the land where each drawing was made. As Will has handwritten names on the tins of flints, I made notes of what caught my eye on the back of each square: insects, a cairn, birdsong, swallows flying around the flints barn, shadows and lines of grass moving over the drawings, field and woodland flowers, and grasses.

With each month's visit, the field names and my now worn paper map guided me each day. Some areas I passed through several times. Coneygars became a regular route, as did the old railway track: an access route to many areas of the farm, now a pedestrianised greenway but still a way from A to B and back again.

Whereas Coneygars has a lot of flint finds, my main 'finds' field became Downs Bank where I camped. Here I watched the full moon and the solstice sunset and sunrise. On another occasion, a large wave of mist swept across the farm, up towards the tent, then retreated back downhill. With the lower fields still damp the next morning, I looked for sunny dry areas to make drawings. A thunderstorm in Dancy's Fancy soaked one square, embedding the ground in the drawing. On the back of this square I noted: "Paper tears and surface lifts. This one is mixed in with the field. Grasshoppers hopping everywhere as rain falls."

I enjoyed the freedom to wander, occasionally meeting farm workers and hearing their stories of this landscape, their favourite areas and suggestions for routes into harder-to-find fields. I particularly liked the signage at the farm on being custodians of the land for future generations: 'The land is not ours but belongs to the future and it is our responsibility to leave it in good heart.'

The Artists and their work: Ruth Broadbent

As I walked further afield I experienced the sheer scale of the farm, growing increasingly familiar with the network of fields and their names. Walking down the hill from Pond Ground, searching for a way into Puzzlets (which remained an unsolved puzzle), I saw pylons I had visited previously stretching into the far distance. When I first camped here some years ago, I had no idea that the farm reached this far across the landscape.

During my July visit I explored the further reaches of the farm to the West. In walking these fields I noticed how some have a small corner on the other side of a busy dual carriageway that has sliced through the farm. As a place where so many well-used routes once spread from Corinium, these old ways (the Fosse, Akeman Street, Welsh Way and Whiteway) are now busy with traffic dominating other users of the land, public transport non-existent and a footpath across a dual carriageway a risky challenge.



As I neared the end of my August visit, my slow walking in the fields gave me the chance to pause, revisit some old favourites, and think about how I might present the work for this exhibition. Placing some of my ground drawings on the rusty 'finds' tray in the flint room during my June visit had led me to think about presenting them as 'finds' in a way that encouraged multiple ways of displaying, sifting, sorting, rearranging. The nature of all my Groundlines series, like a pack of cards, offers multiple ways of presenting them in different contexts. The ones made at Abbey Home Farm could be grouped by the month in which they were made, by altitude, by field, alphabetically, by visual layout, tone of pencil marks, as a grid or in neat piles or scattered amongst the flints. I have framed them here in the order in which they were walked.

The two drawings made in the flint barn (one on the floor of the flint room and one on the shelf in front of Pool Piece tin of flints) are the only two elevated from ground level, removed from that month's walk into a frame of their own. Surrounded by flints, I felt connected to the ground up here with the swallows flying back and forth to their nests.

I use a simple toolkit of 7 x 7cm squares of paper and a range of pencils, contained in a small portable box that fits in my bag. Rather than creating an exact tracing of the ground, I am making a drawing that records the marks of my pencil as I engage with and try to understand what is beneath the paper. At times my pencil slips over the edge of an unseen stone leaving a mark, a kind of visual conversation between myself, the materials of graphite pencil and the ground. I use a range of B pencils, although often one becomes my preferred choice, this time it was an HB Staedtler which broke in half in my bag from being used so much.

The Artists and their work: Ruth Broadbent

As well as its history, through regular visits and staying on the farm, walking both its past and present, I also discovered its archaeology, ecology and geology (flint is not a natural geological feature here). I noticed the field margins, discovered the tithe map, its connections to other places through its tracks and roads, and thought about enclosures and environmental issues in caring for the land today.

I find that the tactile and sensory aspect to making Groundlines through creative walking, pausing to closely observe the ground and listening to sounds, is quiet and contemplative. This gives me the opportunity to develop a relationship with a landscape and discover some of its visible and hidden layers.

I now have a better understanding of the farm and am able to navigate it using the field names and recollections of my visits to each field. These names drew me into the stories of this area. I assumed that Camp Ground was linked to the abundant Roman history of the area but was in fact the location of a wartime camp. Manitoba has an unknown history, maybe a wartime Canadian land girl or a farm worker. Sisters is probably linked to some sisters, and Barn due to a barn (having been) there. Not labelled on the map, Will told me his childhood recollections of the woodland named Rats Castle.

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It was lovely to feel welcomed into this landscape and be able to take time to explore and understand and develop a relationship with it, spending time amongst the labelled tins of flint in the barn, and lose myself for hours wandering from field to field, musing over the various field names from Dancy's Fancy and Happy Lands, to Barn Sisters and Hitchens Knowle. I made repeated visits to the mound of dag stone in Oxlays, enjoying this elemental trace of earth and water with its connection to the ocean floor, and its holes made by sea creatures when this area was long ago beneath sea level. This farm is full of stories, elemental and human. Reading my notes on the back of each square reminds me of my own story in relation to this area. A thoroughly enjoyable and rewarding project.



The Artists and their work: Ruth Broadbent

Background to Groundlines

Groundlines drawings are about connecting to the past, present and future of the tracks and lines, to consider place, people, history and environment. This mapping of the surface of the ground and a line of tracks is both subjective and objective, fluid and changing. As time passes the surface of the ground shifts, reflecting both human and climatic interactions and interventions.

Previous Groundlines include A Line Across England following a line of ancient tracks from Norfolk to Weymouth, An Island Line (a coastal loop of the Isle of Wight), Five Rivers Line (Germany).

A description of these journeys is on my website and in Living Maps Review, Spring 2022 edition (Mapworks), 'Groundlines and Puddle Worlds: maps as records of real and imaginary worlds'.



About

Ruth Broadbent is inspired by nature, ecology, lines of landscape, and line in drawing and sculpture. Recent elemental works include Groundlines and responses to water, from seas to puddles. Walking and movement are central in the way that she creatively responds to place.

She teaches in art centres, colleges and universities, is the founder of walk.draw, and creates events for organisations and festivals. Drawing, walking and ecology artist networks include Walking the Land CIC (Co-Director), Walking Artists Network, Museum of Walking (Co-Creator), walk.listen.create and hyphæ drawing collective.

36. Waterfarrow
13/7/24

Drawing made on some grass amongst clover and yellow birdfoot's trefoil. Curious sheep looking on. Edges of field here are conservation area. Can see all around area have walked - getting a feel for the layout of the farm now and its furthest reaches.

AHF / 16.00 / 152m

57. Lower Ground
2/8/24

Today will be led by looking for patches of shade. Ground still damp after a dramatic line of mist rolled up from here stretching right across the fields of farm. It came up to tent on top of hill then retreated back downhill. A hazy line and clouds of rising winter mist, damp and cool after the heat and storm.

AHF / 6.77 / 120m

66. Coneygars
2/8/24

Just done some flint searching fieldwalking along the edge of field as so many have been found here. Found two chalk-like bits of stone instead. Drawing made on what am guessing is Cotswold Brash (my imagined flint at Well Ground was probably Cotswold Brash too). I love the links embedded within it to the Oolitic limestone deep beneath and the ocean floor at one time.
AHF / 8.78 / 139.4m

68. Wiggold Woods
2/8/24

I remember walking here on first field walking visit, much earlier this year. Leaves and undergrowth now it's summer. Birds calling, breeze through trees, patches of sunlight from the newly named Wiggold Downs - walked to end of woods and couldn't see a way into field so am taking another path back through woods. By trees with green socks.
AHF / / 151.3m

Transcriptions of notes on the back of selected drawings

More info and images are on my website

The Artists and their work: Ruth Broadbent

Ruth Broadbent - *Fieldwalking / Groundlines*

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| <p>1 Yellow School Copse 19/6/24 AHF // 136m</p> <p>2 South Way 19/6/24 AHF/9.43 / 134.1m</p> <p>3 Yellow Schools 19/6/24 AHF / 10.00 / 131.8m</p> <p>4 Downs 19/6/24 AHF/8.68/135m</p> <p>5 THE FLINT SHELF 20/6/24 AHF// 135.8m</p> <p>6 THE FLINT ROOM FLOOR 20/6/24 AHF//136m</p> <p>7 Downs Bank (lower end) 20/6/24 AHF/6.29/125.3m</p> <p>8 Round Hill 20/6/24 AHF/7.16/123.1m</p> <p>9 Pool Ground 20/6/24 AHF/8.08/126.8m</p> <p>10 Coneygars 20/6/24 AHF / 8.78/135.1m</p> <p>11 Deer's Choice 20/6/24 AHF// 146.5m</p> <p>12 Oxlays 20/6/24 AHF/10.65/146.1m</p> <p>13 Ferns 20/6/24 AHF/ 16.64 / 139.1m</p> <p>14 Downs Bank 20/6/24 AHF / 6.29 / 137.1m</p> <p>15 Stow Paddocks 21/6/24 AHF/2.76/135.5m</p> <p>16 Barn Field 21/6/24 AHF/5.81 / 136.4m</p> <p>17 Long Fosse 21/6/24 AHF / 12.86/137.1m</p> <p>18 Rats Castle 21/6/24 AHF // 137m</p> <p>19 Shooters Hill woodland 21/6/24 AHF // 139.7m</p> <p>20 Barleystones Hitchens Knowle 21/6/24 AHF/9.55/140.1m</p> <p>21 Shooters Hill 21/6/24 AHF/9.91 / 138.7m</p> <p>22 Ragged Hedge 21/6/24 AHF // 139.7m</p> <p>23 Veg Plots 21/6/24 AHF / 4.39 / 133.7m</p> <p>24 The Sisters 12/7/24 AHF// 176.3m</p> <p>25 Barn Sisters 12/7/24 AHF/13.48/167m</p> <p>26 Ridgeway 13/7/24 AHF / 13.72/152.4m</p> <p>27 Hitchens Hedge 13/7/24 AHF/9.03/150.2m</p> <p>28 Top Rook Hill 13/7/24 AHF/6.21 / 142m</p> <p>29 Rook Hill 13/7/24 AHF/6.93 /141.1m</p> <p>30 Home Ground 13/7/24 AHF/5.86 / 140.2m</p> <p>31 Horse Ground 13/7/24 AHF / 11.56 / 137.7m</p> <p>32 Hare Bushes Wood 13/7/24 AHF// 143.2m</p> <p>33 17 Acres 13/7/24 AHF/7.39/143.8m</p> <p>34 Claydon Hill 13/7/24 AHF/5.14/144m</p> <p>35 Baunton Field Piece 13/7/24 AHF/ 8.89/158.7m</p> <p>36 Waterfarrow 13/7/24 AHF/16.00 / 152m</p> | <p>37 Steep Hill 13/7/24 AHF / 10.28 / 153.5m</p> <p>38 Eldon Cross 13/7/24 AHF/9.73/154.2m</p> <p>39 Mortar Pits 13/7/24 AHF/13.47 / 155m</p> <p>40 Veg Plots 14/7/24 AHF / 4.39 / 135.8m</p> <p>41 Veg Garden 14/7/24 AHF/1.92/134.8m</p> <p>42 Veg Garden 14/7/24 AHF/1.92/133.4m</p> <p>43 Railway Track 14/7/24 AHF // 157.3m</p> <p>44 Happy Lands 14/7/24 AHF/7.90/148.6m</p> <p>45 Beetles Piece 14/7/24 AHF/4.92 / 154.6m</p> <p>46 Welsh Way Corner 14/7/24 AHF / 10.81 / 157.3m</p> <p>47 Aerofield 14/7/24 AHF / 14.24/154.2m</p> <p>48 North Fosse 14/7/24 AHF / 10.53 / 135.5m</p> <p>49 Between café and veg plot 1/8/24 AHF // 134.8m</p> <p>50 Downs Bank 1/8/24 AHF/6.29/121.9m</p> <p>51 Downs Bank 1/8/24 AHF/6.29/132.2m</p> <p>52 Hill Field 1/8/24 AHF/6.75 / 136m</p> <p>53 Dancy's Fancy 1/8/24 AHF/10.41 / 135.7m</p> <p>54 Downs 1/8/24 AHF/ 8.68 / 136.2m</p> <p>55 Downs Bank 1/8/24 AHF/6.29/134.3m</p> <p>56 Yellow School Copse 1/8/24 AHF // 134m</p> <p>57 Lower Ground 2/8/24 AHF/6.77 / 120m</p> <p>58 Old Hill 2/8/24 AHF/2.2 / 138.3m</p> <p>59 Ampney Ground 2/8/24 AHF/5.3 / 139m</p> <p>60 West Mead 2/8/24 AHF/4.22/143m</p> <p>61 Pond Ground 2/8/24 AHF/3.54/145.1m</p> <p>62 Manitoba 2/8/24 AHF/8.02 / 143.7m</p> <p>63 Little Ampney 2/8/24 AHF / 8.30/143.3m</p> <p>64 Well Ground 2/8/24 AHF/7.29/145.9m</p> <p>65 Mead 2/8/24 AHF/2.5/141m</p> <p>66 Coneygars 2/8/24 AHF/8.78/139.4m</p> <p>67 Long Bottom 2/8/24 AHF/3.00 / 148m</p> <p>68 Wiggold Woods 2/8/24 AHF//</p> <p>69 Railway track junction 2/8/24 AHF // 149m</p> <p>70 Dag Stone in Oxlays 2/8/24 AHF / 10.65/146.8m</p> <p>71 Gatepost Square into Coneygars 2/8/24 AHF/8.78 /141.2m</p> <p>72 Sisters 3/8/24 AHF/6.54 / 160m</p> |
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Valerie Coffin Price

Field Fragments

2024

Field Walking

‘... grubbing in the grass
for particles of knowledge, nothing in themselves
but huge with meaning in the right place.’

Mood, Lesley Saunders

What is archaeology? Does it always have to be to do with ancient objects or places, such as *Corinium* or Neolithic burial grounds like *The Sisters*? We do tend to think of archaeology in terms of the medieval period, the Romans or Neolithic, Bronze or Iron ages. However, recent studies in contemporary archaeology have focused on much more up to date sites, two interesting examples being the ‘excavation’ of the studio of the painter Francis Bacon, www.ucd.ie/scholarcast/scholarcast10.html or the archaeological dig at a cutlery factory in Sheffield, www.wessexarch.co.uk/our-work/butcher-wheel-sheffield. In addition to this there are many contemporary artists who use archaeological methods and techniques in their work, artists such as Marc Dion, Gair Dunlop, Susan Hiller and Anselm Keifer.

All the artists in this exhibition employ an archaeological approach to their work, in my case, having recently completed an MA in Contemporary Art & Archaeology, the work responds to those liminal drawings created on the land by the architecture of the farm, its routes and trackways and to the links hidden in the landscape, its geology and archaeology.

Field Fragments

‘And mostly all there is are fragments; all
there is are mostly fragments, ...’

The Uses of Greek: viii, Lesley Saunders

Invisible connections exist within our landscapes, so travelling between south Wales and the Cotswolds as part of the project facilitated an overview of the archaeological area known as the Cotswold-Severn region. Professor Tim Darvill, who is leading *The Sisters* archaeological dig at Abbey Home Farm, has written extensively about the Cotswold-Severn long barrows in *Long Barrows of the Cotswolds and Surrounding Areas*, and numerous articles.

The Artists and their work: Valerie Coffin Price

Having intended to focus on the archaeological dig at Abbey Home Farm, partly due to the cancellation of the dig this year, my attention has been drawn to the wider landscape around spaces between: between archaeological sites; between rivers, landforms and seas; between countries; between the fields of the farm. It also focused attention on the 'social dimensions of landscapes'; how we use landscapes, now and in the past; means and reasons for travel; mapping and naming of places. Part of this was realising how the physical geography of the Severn valley might have influenced people, means and routes of travel, the archaeology of the land.

The watershed to the west of Abbey Home Farm means that local rivers, the Churn and Coln, flow into the Thames. Rivers and streams on the other side of the watershed (between Cirencester and Stroud) flow to the Severn.



Looking at the tithe map of Abbey Home Farm it is easy to see the field structure, field names and roads surrounding and running through the farm. The Fosse Way, Akeman Street, the White Way and the Welsh Way. Even though these roads carry predominantly Roman names it is likely that they were ancient trackways before that. The *Typology of Ancient Trackways* lists 'complex track systems' dating from the Mesolithic and more specific routes which linked settlements in the Neolithic period. The Welsh Way may have been one of these megalithic routes, or simply a means of getting from the Thames valley, across the river Severn to Wales.

The Welsh Way (not to be confused with the Welsh Road which runs further north) appears to be an Iron Age trade route which 'links the highest navigable point on the River Thames at Lechlade to the lowest crossing point of the River Severn at Gloucester.' Nowadays the Welsh Way is identifiable from the Ermin Way at Duntisbourne to Fairford, via Barnsley, and on to Lechlade.

The Artists and their work: Valerie Coffin Price



However, I was finally drawn back to the farm itself through the use of maps, drawings and photographs while snatches of recordings and conversations played in the background of my mind, adding flavour and nuance to my visual explorations. The final drawings explore the fragmentary nature, both of archaeology and field walking, of memory as well as the apparently random nature of the fields, their names and finds.

‘... we work with fragments, ...
we work with the longing for lost texts to be discovered, for
every broken thing to be repaired ...’

Ghostwritten Classics, Edmund Richardson



Works: All poetry is from *Nominy-Dominy*, published by Two Rivers Press.

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| <i>Field Fragments 1</i> (2024) | ink on paper: 51 x 40.5cm |
| <i>Field Fragments 2</i> (2024) | ink on paper: 40.5 x 51cm |
| <i>Field Fragments 3</i> (2024) Poetry:
Lesley Saunders | graphite, ink on paper: 40.5 x 51cm |
| <i>Field Fragments 4</i> (2024) | ink on Khadi paper: 40.5 x 51cm |

- £500 each (unframed)

The Artists and their work: Valerie Coffin Price



About:

As an artist Valerie Coffin Price's work deals with issues to do with the environment, language and cultural identity; the poetic resonance of language and its connection to a sense of place. The work itself involves a process of archeo-visual research using drawing and textual traces to construct works inspired by elements of natural and human geography. These traces include fragments of objects, memories, history and remnants of text and sound. It is these 'unseen paths' that connect us to the liminal, to the invisible world of currents, winds, ideas and language that drives my work.

In recent years she has been working with poetry, literature and landscape as inspiration, source material and content for my art practice; the work partly involves an immersion in the landscape through walking.

References:

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- Darvill, T. (1999). 'The historic environment, historic landscapes and space-time-action models in landscape archaeology.' In *The Archaeology and Anthropology of Landscape*. Routledge.
- Darvill, T. (2004) *Long Barrows of the Cotswolds and Surrounding Areas*. Tempus.
- Darvill, T. (Draft). 'Prehistory in the Cirencester Area' in VCH Glos 16: 60-69. www.history.ac.uk/sites/default/files/file-uploads/2021-11/prehistory.pdf
- Saunders, L. (2018) *Nominy-Dominy*. Two Rivers Press.
- Tilley, C. (1994) *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths and Monuments*. Berg. Wilson Art Gallery & Museum. *Cotswold Long Barrows*. www.cheltenhammuseum.org.uk/collection/cotswold-long-barrows/

Links:

- UHI MA www.uhi.ac.uk/en/courses/ma-contemporary-art-and-archaeology/
- Francis Bacon www.ucd.ie/scholarcast/scholarcast10.html
- Sheffield Cutlery www.wessexarch.co.uk/our-work/butcher-wheel-sheffield



Andy Freedman

2024

Digital Photography

The work is a creative response to the flints and whilst it is reasonably well informed, it contains lots of imagination and speculation.

Layers (digital photograph 2024)

What were they like, the people who made and used these flint tools?

We know that 4000 years is a very short time in human evolution. It's about 250 generations ago which doesn't sound so long when compared to the history of the human species. So a reasonable conclusion is that they would have been a lot like us in their capabilities, both physical and mental.

We know that we are standing on land which has been walked on by generations of people going back thousands of years. Many generations of humans who left very little trace. And before the humans, lots happened here too. Ask a geologist.

Eight Flints in a Frame (digital photograph 2024)

Field walking: it's the oldest form of archaeology

Flint Walking also requires a specific way of looking.

Victorian history and archaeology generally described people who didn't leave writing and buildings as 'primitive'. 'Civilisation' required records of a social structure, a legal system and culture which the Victorians could recognise. The Greeks, Romans, Egyptians and Chinese all left much material which the Victorians could recognise and understand.

Cultures without that legacy were 'uncivilised' a description also applied to contemporary people living outside Europe. The aboriginal Australian people provide a particularly clear example of how cultures could be dismissed because of a lack of the right kind of legacy.

There are so many flints

What does that indicate?

Maybe: Lots of people lived here?

People lived here for a very long time?

One thing we know is that these objects are long lasting.

I wonder which objects from our culture will be collectable in 4000 years' time.

One thought which kept coming to me when I was an archaeology student was that we underestimate the skills and capabilities of people who lived in the past

We know that flint is not naturally occurring in the immediate area of Cirencester, so every one of these objects has been imported.

That probably means they were carried by foot and that looks like it went on for a long period of time.

We don't know exactly where from but we are aware that flint factories were working in East Anglia.

The Artists and their work: Andy Freedman



Flint Tool Paths (digital photograph 2024)

Did those flint traders use the same paths? Some people have wondered, including myself, whether some of those Roman roads which famously focus around Cirencester could possibly have been built on the site of paths already in use by flint traders and other travellers over the preceding 2000 years.

We're just wondering. The lack of material from the pre Roman period makes it much harder to fathom and much easier to pass over than the excitement which the wealth of Roman remains gives us.

Hands (digital photograph 2024)

We can imagine the curiosity and awe felt by people finding an ancient object. Many of us would experience the same thing if we found something today!

Just imagine being a Roman in this area 2000 years ago.

Then imagine looking at the ground and finding a flint tool which at that point could have been 1000-2000 years old.

You might well have wondered about who made these precisely crafted and perfectly preserved objects

You might think that you weren't the first people to wonder.

And later, the Saxons walking these fields: what did they make of the flints lying on the ground sometimes next to shards of Roman pottery?

The Artists and their work: Andy Freedman



What wonderment?

I find myself wondering as many people will about the people who made and used these tools. What was their day like? Were they in constant pain because of untreated medical problems? What was their belief system? We know about the barrows and stone circles people during the Neolithic.

But before that time, flints were also used by the nomadic hunter gatherers of the Mesolithic maybe 6000 years ago. We know even less about them than we do about the Neolithic people

But as human beings, they would have been very similar to us.

These flints are the most enduring of things.

Each is the result of skilled craft in the hands of a flint knapper, one of our countless nameless ancestors who stood on the same part of the planet as we are now.

We know that the emperor Augustus was interested in findings from antiquity. Flint tools and preserved bones of extinct animals, which were very much older, were objects of wonder rather than used to understand more about an era .

Stonehenge

We've recently heard that contrary to what most of us has been taught at school, one of the central stones came not from West Wales but from Scotland. People continue to discover new things about the past

So about 4000 years ago, people were able to transport a 6 ton rock from Scotland to Wiltshire. Was this by land or sea? We've been told that there were no roads to speak of and that their boats likely to be like coracles.

So how was the stone transported all that way? We don't know how. Or why. Yet.

From now on, every time you walk across a field, keep your eyes open!

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About

Andy Freedman enjoys walking, being in nature, writing and photography

He studied Archaeology at degree level and then took a MA in film, after which much of his work has been in the field of moving and still images.

Each year he spends time living outdoors, cooking over a fire, in the woods, away from so called civilisation.

He's worked for 50 years taking groups to places where they can experience nature with all their senses. Sometimes they're invited to imagine what it was like to live outdoors, on these islands, a few thousand years ago. . A director of national outdoor charity Forest School camps he finds it informative to reflect on the steps civilisation has made to control nature, a process which began at the start of the Neolithic . Founder of the Stroud Film Festival, he's working on a film about the impact of the arrival of farmers on the Hunter Gatherer people who lived here 5000 years ago.

His work includes photographs and films as well as poems and song lyrics, much of it about the natural world. A member of Walking the Land he's contributed work to a number of previous exhibitions and is currently involved in the Growing Places project about Landscape and Food.

Caroline Morris

Topographic Clews

2024

Natural & Bleached Calico
Cotton Organdie



I began with researching the history of the landscape around Abbey Home Farm, via its mapping. Its prehistoric roots were of course the origin of the exhibition through its flints, but this land is rich in history far beyond that. It is framed by

Roman roads, a salt way and a drover's road; it was crossed by a railway and later sliced through by a dual carriageway. I have been drawn to historical maps as an inspiration for some time and traced the past of Abbey Home Farm through one hundred years of Ordnance Survey maps, nineteenth century tithe apportionment maps and current field maps.

As with previous projects, my attention focussed on layers of the past and the signs of it in the landscape. This landscape, like many, is a palimpsest of human activity from prehistory to the present day. So many traces, clues, tales, uses and meanings; the past can be read in the landscape if one only looks. The way Will Chester-Master spoke about his field walking, carried out for pleasure rather than as a systematic archaeological exercise: slow walking, observation, being in the moment, focusing through a single sense reminded me of a passage in *Study in Scarlet*.

"...[they] proceeded slowly down the path, or rather down the fringe of grass which flanked the path, keeping [their] eyes riveted upon the ground."

I overlaid modern maps on tithe maps and researched toponyms, techniques of landscape archaeology, field name studies, and took that understanding on my walks at the farm. The changes across time overlay each other both physically and in the naming of features in the landscape.



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The names of fields hint at uses, owners and key topographical features to the extent that one could read the landscape from the map as well as from the ground. The aptly named author John Field, and his 'English Field Names' dictionary, provided rich reference for reading the land.

For some time, I have been using darning, patching and repair as a metaphor for landscape history, or at least my experience of it. The simplest stitch echoing the lines of footpaths, layers of fabric, rips and frays. Human interaction and use of the land is etched and worn into our landscape, like the impressions and repairs formed in a well-loved armchair. In an essay, *Marx's Coat*, Peter Stallybrass wrote that clothes makers and repairers in the nineteenth century would call the wrinkles in the elbows of sleeves, memories; the wrinkles recorded the body that inhabited the garment. In this instance this referred to the way clothing takes on the form of its wearer. For me, this is analogous to the traces in the landscape made by people; culture upon nature.

There is a linguistic connection between landscape and cloth too. The origin of the word clue comes from clews, or balls of thread, like that given by Ariadne to Theseus. Looking for clues (clews) to the past in fields and hills.



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Beginning with sample making, learning, building the layers of understanding of the materials and how they could represent. For me, this making also becomes as meditative a practice as the walking itself. Such mindful practices echoing the way that Will described his fieldwalking activities.

The patchworking of the modern field system in muted minimal colours, using a combination of bleached and natural calico. Roads overlaid; a railway overlaid then frayed back. The slightly haphazard patching creating shape, echoing inaccurately the natural undulations in the landscape. Returning the idiosyncrasies of older mapping to the precise modern.

This is the first step for this fragment of land. It will be suffused in the landscape, through foraged dyes from the field margins. It will be extended and grow. It will become worn, less neat just as nature pulls at the edges of the human tidied landscape.

The patchwork is based on the modern map, which is a landscape well documented, geolocated, measured and in motion. The tithe map is translucent organdie, stitched with the old hedgerows and roads. Its outlines based on the hand drawn, the estimated, the ghostly remnants of the past laying beneath. If it is laid over its calico sister, it will sometimes match but other times show change. Its field names enabling recognition, identification and giving their location. Fields named for their daily use or their topography – labels loosely attached and prone to loss as time goes by and ownership priorities shift.



About

Caroline Morris has an MA in Time-Based Arts Practices from Dartington College of Arts and a PhD in cultural history from UWE. Before her PhD, she created performance pieces using museum and heritage practices including site-specific guided tours and a museum in a suitcase which toured venues from Penzance to Hull. Since completing the PhD, she has been using walking and place to explore hidden heritage and cultural memory. She chooses the medium best suits her research interests and processes. Most recently this has led to using fabric and foraged dye stuffs as mediums to imbue meaning and document her experience of the landscape and its history.

She has worked and exhibited with *Walking the Land* on projects such as *Confluence* at Museum in the Park and *Ghost Mills* at Stroud Valley Artspace.