

A photograph of a dense, overgrown woodland. In the foreground, a line of small, bright red flags on thin white sticks is planted in the ground, stretching across the frame. The background is filled with thick foliage, including large green leaves and bare, tangled tree branches, creating a sense of a hidden or wild landscape.

# Hidden Landscapes

Discovering the Hidden Wilderness of  
Letchworth Garden City

An exhibition by artist Christina Bryant

9th August – 29th August 2013



# Hidden Landscapes Report

Discovering the Hidden Wilderness of Letchworth Garden City

September 2012 – August 2013

CHRISTINA BRYANT

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**Hidden Landscapes Project**  
September 2012 – August 2013

[www.hiddenlandscapesproject.wordpress.com](http://www.hiddenlandscapesproject.wordpress.com)

**Hidden Landscapes Collection**

[www.ehive.com/account/4815](http://www.ehive.com/account/4815)

**Exhibition**

9th – 29th August 2013

Letchworth Arts Centre



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## Introduction and Background

Over the course of 12 months, beginning September 2012, eight sites located within and around Letchworth Garden City were explored and narrowed down to four (Sites 1, 2, 3 and 6). These were then 'excavated' as part of the Hidden Landscapes Project. The suitability of these sites for the project was determined through a combination of field-walking expeditions, the gathering of recollections from locals, as well as through personal knowledge and experience. I was specifically looking for sites that stood within the periphery of the town, just beyond the surveillance and regulation of the dominant authority, and that showed evidence of being utilised by the town's inhabitants. The specific aims of this investigation were to determine what opportunities presented themselves within these spaces for those who go looking, and what these activities might offer in the way of alternative narratives of the Garden City.

### **Site 1: The Pudding Basin at Norton Common (National Grid Reference (NGR): TL 221 334)**

The Pudding Basin at Norton Common sits on the east side of the nature reserve, approximately 45 metres north of Letchworth outdoor pool. The bowl-shaped hollow of land (diameter approximately 43 metres) was supposedly formed through the quarrying of chalk in previous years and is now covered with trees and scrub, forming a relatively secluded site that is only visible if entry is made. Initial field-walking trips produced significant evidence that this site is used regularly, and local reports, usually in the form of reminiscence of childhood, indicate a history of use.

### **Site 2: The Boffy (Norton Well) (NGR: TL 210 352)**

The Boffy has a strong personal connection to me and sits quite vividly in my own memory of childhood adventure. This place, distant from adult influence, both alluring and terrifying in equal measure, gave rise to horror stories that, on my return for this project, I discover have endured in their effect. The Boffy is the furthest from the town (half a mile away) and also the largest (approximately 230 metres in length). The field on which The Boffy is situated has been recorded on the National Monument Record (no. 365779) detailing an early medieval inhumation cemetery.

### **Site 3: Roman Camp (The Quarry) at Wilbury Hills (NGR: TL 202 325)**

Roman Camp is the site of a mid-19th-century quarry situated at the top of Wilbury Hill and is located on the northern corner of the Wilbury Hill hill fort (Monument no. 365779). It is approximately 115 metres in length and 60 metres wide, and is located across the road from the Icknield Way Cemetery, the resting place of Sir Ebenezer Howard, founder of the Garden City.

### **Site 6: Placebo Underpass (A1(M)) (NGR: TL 239 332)**

Site 6 is entirely concrete and tarmac and is passed over by A1(M) traffic almost continually, day and night. Its transient nature adds to its wilderness characteristics. There is no scrub or trees, but its location on the edge of town and the physical cover it provides, attracts a number of inhabitants and adequately disguises their activities. It falls on the Garden City Greenway, a pathway that encloses Letchworth ([www.greenway.org.uk](http://www.greenway.org.uk)), which has as its motto 'where town and country meet'.

## Site 1: The Pudding Basin

I was drawn to Norton Common by numerous anecdotes from many different sources, including the mention of a recent lone, blue tent spotted in the undergrowth. I was at Site 1 for four days in the depths of cold December, mapping its layout, excavating the artefacts and observing.

### Excavation Description

I head for a pathway left of the bench and have a quick check over my shoulder to see if I have been spotted approaching. When I see no one is looking, I seize my chance and slip through a low, dark gap in the overhanging trees. The pathway takes me through and into its hidden interior. There is a main centre area that is quickly identifiable (area 4) and around it evidence of other worn sub-centres (areas 1, 2 and 3). I can see them by the wear on the earth, patches flattened and smoothed by the movement of bodies and the soles of their shoes. These areas show time spent at these points, a presence that has not just been a fleeting passage through, on to somewhere else.

I perch on a fallen tree and plan my investigation, always partially distracted however by a creak and a snap, a sudden scurry and a flap and the flash of a domestic dog, nose to the ground, collar jangling, darting through the undergrowth before being beckoned by an unseen owner just beyond the perimeter. The appearance of the dog heightens discomfort and self-consciousness and I briefly play out a scenario of meeting the owner and how we might interact in this place. No one enters, of course, and I remain invisible and somehow implicated in the concealment of this place.

I carry out the four excavations over four days, each excavation taking me around two hours. I try to work quickly and efficiently, perfecting the process. I measure and mark out the area with pegs and yellow string, lining it up to face north and then mark it out into a metre-squared grid. I do it all with an eye over my shoulder.

Once the finds have been flagged and logged, I collect them into my find bags, numbering each one as I go. My yellow Marigold hands delve into the undergrowth, prise from mud, delicately lift and transport each find from its place on the ground, into a plastic gripseal bag, where it is sealed and collected. I avoid looking too closely at this point. In their present environment the items seem chaotic, unpredictable, unstable almost, like they have the potential to maim, poison or infect with the wrong kind of handling. These fresh finds need to sit in a kind of psychological quarantine before I can examine them.

Once finished, the flags are pulled, the string is rewound and the pegs are collected. The finds are gathered into a carrier bag, equipment packed and rucksack zipped. I scan the excavated area. Except for the void of debris and the occasional flattening of areas of foliage, it is unidentifiable.

### The Pudding Basin Finds

<i>Categories*</i>	<i>Area 1</i>	<i>Area 2</i>	<i>Area 3</i>	<i>Area 4</i>
Craft		1		
Disposable bag				1
Drinks container	1	9	4	6
Food packaging	5		3	1
Footwear			1	
Lighting			1	
Medical			2	2
News		2		1
Personal hygiene	1		1	
Recreation	3		8	10
Stationery		2		5
Unidentified	2	3	7	7
Cooking	1			
DIY				1
Camping		2		

**Table 1: Site 1 find categories**

\*Finds may exist in more than one category, for example, a body spray aerosol can will come under both personal hygiene and recreation as it may be used for both scenting the body and substance abuse.

### Find Category Analysis

Each area produced finds from the category 'Drinks containers'. These finds are made up of both alcoholic drink containers, which are mostly broken glass bottles, and soft/non-alcoholic, carbonated drink containers that are all



plastic bottles. The alcoholic drinks are only found in area 2, where two metal tent pegs (finds 299 and 300) were also found.

Food packaging is found in all areas apart from area 2 and there is an even distribution between sweet and savoury. Sweet snacks are usually chocolate-based and savoury are usually crisps, although there was an empty mackerel tin (find 229) and a metal cooking pot (find 227) found in area 1.



Plate 1: Find 227, metal cooking pot found in area 1

The highest number of finds are in the 'recreation' category. Recreation covers a number of different associated pursuits, including smoking, sexual intercourse, drug taking and games. The highest evidence of recreational pursuits is found in area 4. The finds include a condom wrapper (find 259), two hypodermic syringes (finds 262 and 265), a glow stick (find 261) and an aerosol can (find 260). There is also evidence of sexual intercourse (find 228) found in area 1, located close to the mackerel tin and cooking pot.

There are finds from the category 'Stationery' found in areas 2 and 4. Area 4 shows a high amount of burnt lined paper with some handwritten text (find 273). This would seem to point towards a school diary or workbook. This assumption is supported by the presence of burnt blue card that seems to be some kind of book cover (find 279).



Fig 1: Find 262, hypodermic syringe with cap found in area 4

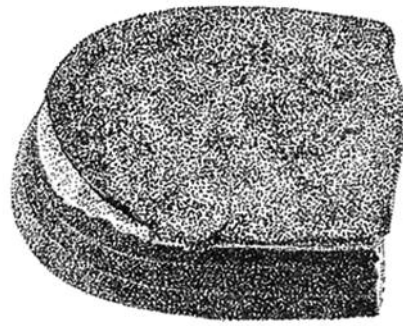


Fig 2: Find 243, heel of a shoe found in area 3

## Discussion

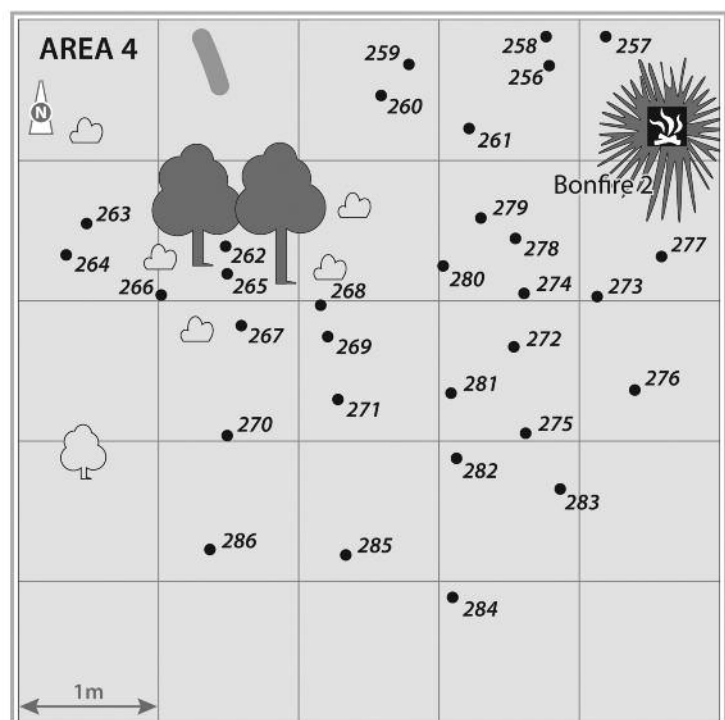
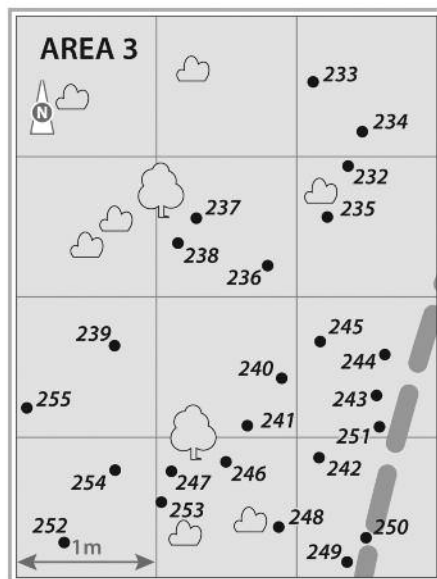
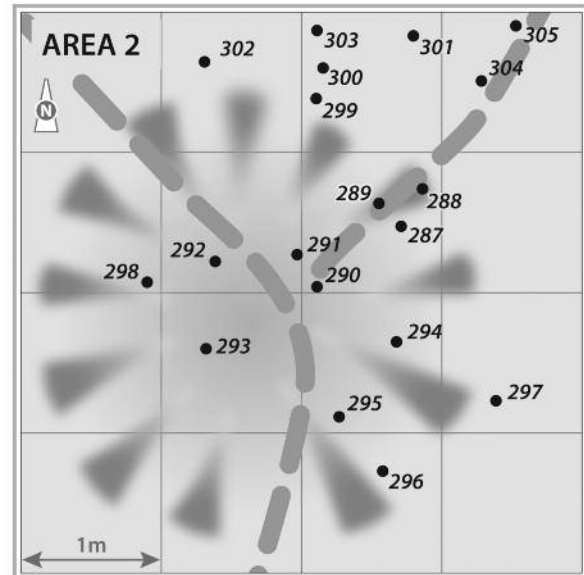
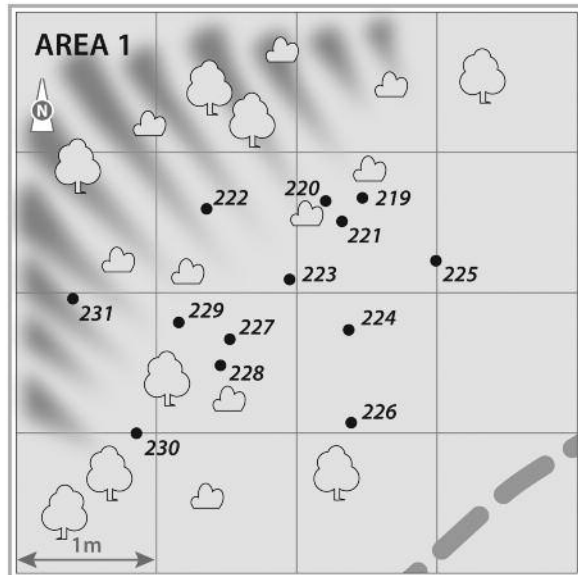
The finds indicate a number of activities throughout, including camping, eating, drinking and, possibly, playing music (find 222). There is a trend, however, towards more illicit pursuits, with a concentration of these located in the centre of the site, the most central point marked by the harder drug-related finds. Many of the activities identified are legal, such as smoking, consuming of alcohol and sexual intercourse. However, due to the location, these pursuits either become illegal or point towards a need to conceal something which is prohibited. The burnt school book pieces would suggest the presence of some young/adolescent occupiers. Its burnt state indicates a possible ritual-type activity potentially used as a symbol for rebellion or a freeing from the constraints of an authoritative force. This also would suggest that some pursuits may be prohibited due to age restrictions.



Plate 2: Find 273, squared paper (burnt fragment) found in area 4

## PUDDING BASIN

### Excavation areas



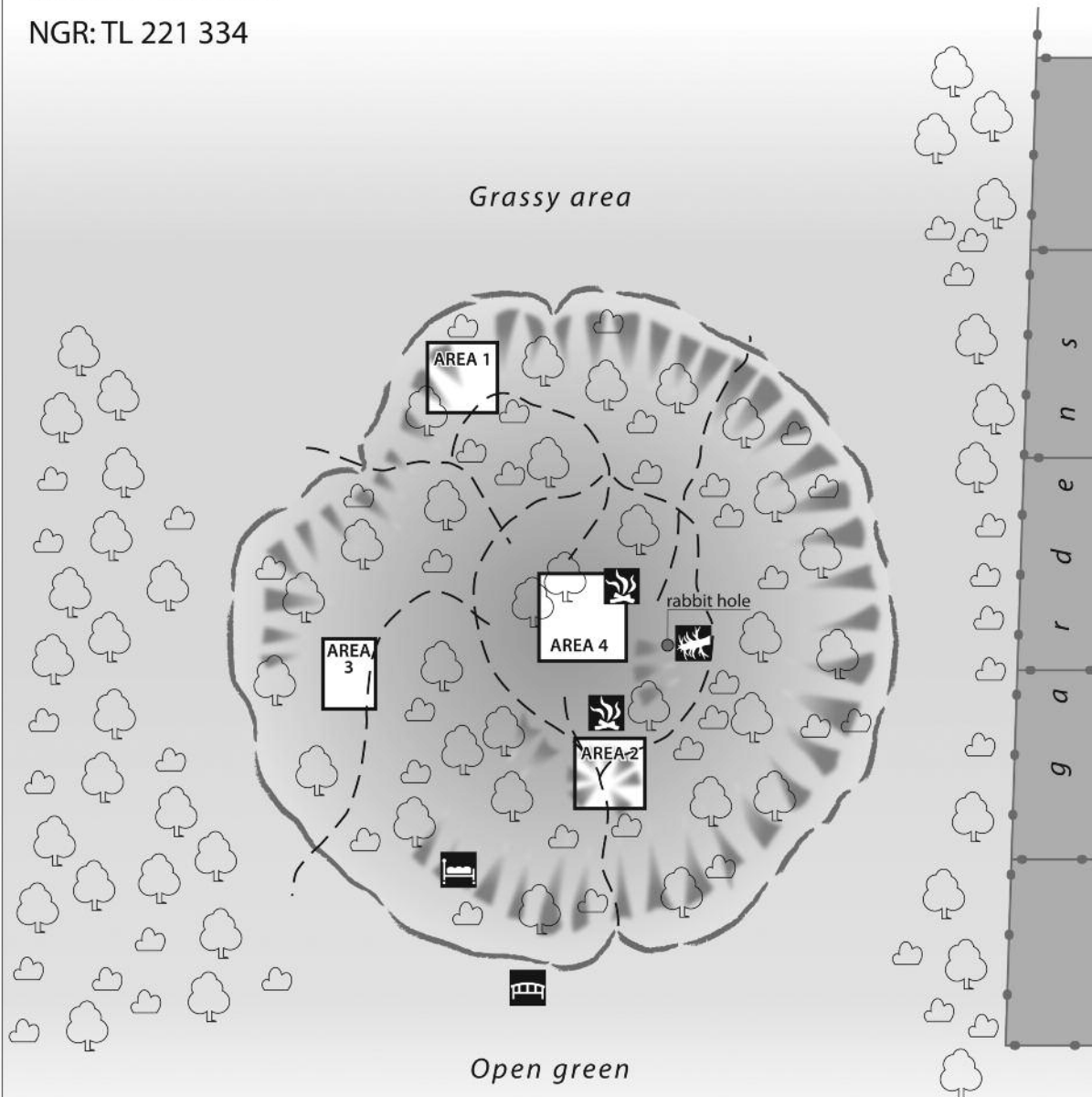
#### Excavation areas

AREA 1	4m x 4m	AREA 2	4m x 4m
AREA 3	4m x 3m	AREA 4	5m x 5m

HL/LGC '12 (1)

# PUDDING BASIN (Norton Common)

NGR: TL 221 334



0 metres 20

**AREA** Excavation areas with inset maps

— — Desire paths

— • — Fence

## Topography and ground cover

Steep slope  
Grass  
Trees/woodland  
Scrub  
Mixed vegetation

## Named features

Bench  
Bonfire site  
Fallen tree or branch  
Mattress



## Site 2: The Boffy

I came to this site revisiting a place I went to in childhood. As an adult I returned in October 2012 and spent a week here mapping, excavating and drawing.

### Site Description

The Boffy is a group of trees located downstream from the local sewage plant, adjacent to Pix Brook. Found at the site's centre is 'Norton Well' (as it is labelled on the OS map) that trickles out as a small stream and joins the brook to the north. Hidden from view of any houses, The Boffy sits quite invisibly at the edge of a crop field at the bottom of a hill.

I enter from an unofficial footpath to the south (area 1) and walk through a line of trees (plate 3). From the main pathway, approximately 20 metres along, I find clearings that divert off into less trodden territory to the east of the site. As I navigate my way, crunching over leaves and twigs and weaving through tall stinging nettles, I find myself entering a tall church-like canopy of trees, standing in almost perfect linear formation. At ground level all is still, but high up over my head the branches sway and crack and knock in a constant rhythmic motion that gives rise to a feeling of exposing isolation. I feel I've travelled much further than I have. Around the base of two of these trees (area 2), I find a gathering of sticks that forms a hut-type structure (fig 3).



Fig 3: Hut structure in area 2

As I circle my way round it to get a better view, I acknowledge the labour required to construct it. A larger tree trunk (including its stump) has been secured between two trees and from this trunk, smaller, thinner branches have been used to weave the two sides, leaving just a small entrance at one end. Inside lies a yellow length of rope, looped and knotted (find 60).

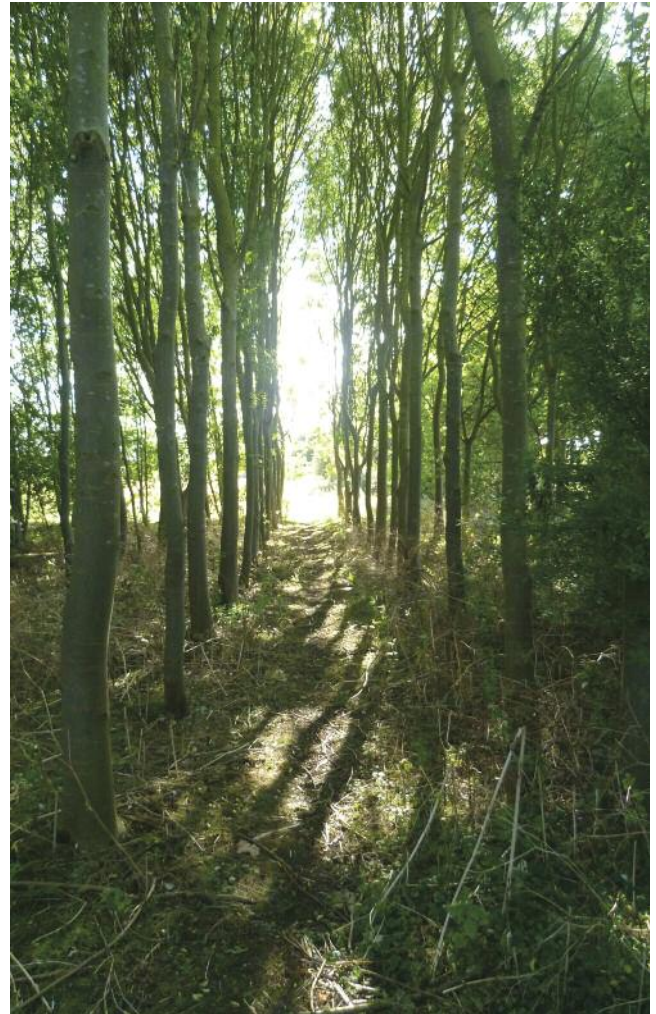


Plate 3: The Boffy south entrance (facing south)



Plate 4: 'Keep Out! or else!' sign found in area 3

Beyond this feature, approximately 20 metres to the north, I find an area of activity (area 3) and the site of a bonfire. This is made up of both charred wood and fresh wood that seems to have been gathered and arranged but, at this point, not burnt. Over the course of my time at The Boffy, a branch structure is constructed (most probably over the weekend at a time I did not visit). Within this area I also stumble across a 'Keep Out! or else!' sign written on a sawn piece of log (plate 4).

At this discovery, I feel my role at The Boffy challenged and distorted somewhat. I move from lone explorer to intruder and become haunted by a slight paranoia.

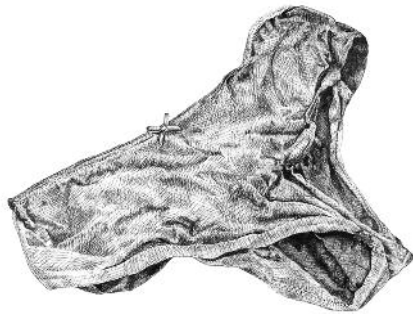


Fig 4: Find 9, ladies' briefs (size 10) found in area 1

### Find Category Analysis

The highest number of finds from one category is drink containers: all but one of these found in area 3. Out of the 14 drink container finds, 10 are alcohol-related, mainly made up of glass shards from bottles. The main location for these is in area 3 around the bonfire with many showing signs of melting.

Area 1 shows an unusually high concentration of medical and personal hygiene-related items as well as the only clothing find (fig 4), and there is a high concentration of finds from the 'Ammunition' category found in area 4.

### Discussion

Activities indicated by the finds include bodily care, social gathering, eating and drinking and, particularly north of the stream, shooting (probably game). The constructed features, which are mostly made from sticks, logs and branches (presumably acquired from the site), include two bridges, a log seat (area 4), a branch structure (area 3) and a hut structure (area 2), and are indicative of attempts made to shape and possess areas of the site. The site appears to be divided into different areas, identifiable by varying characteristics created by the users. It would appear that the bonfire in area 3 is a centre for social activity and is occupied by a number of people most likely to be around adolescence.

### The Boffy Finds

Categories*	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5
Ammunition			1	9	
Clothing	1				
Cutlery			1		
Disposable bag		1			1
Drinks container			13		1
Food packaging	9	5	4		6
Gardening				1	
Medical	7				
Natural			2	2	
Personal Hygiene	6		1		
Recreation	1	1	3		
Stationery	1		1		1
Tree maintenance			1	1	
Unidentified	2	2	4		3

Table 2: Site 2 find categories

(\*Finds may exist in more than one category, for example, a body spray aerosol can will come under both personal hygiene and recreation as it may be used for both scenting the body and substance abuse.)

This assumption is made due to the high quantity of alcohol-related finds, indications of excitable or raucous behaviour, the number of broken and burnt artefacts, and a drinks can with pellet holes (find 51) possibly made by a ball-bearing gun.

Area 2, however, produced fewer finds and this, I assume, is due to the fact that the users were much more focused on the making of the hut. It would indicate this was made at a separate time, by another smaller group of potentially younger inhabitants. The 'Keep Out! or else!' sign in area 3 suggests a possible dispute over territory, presumably between two rival groups.

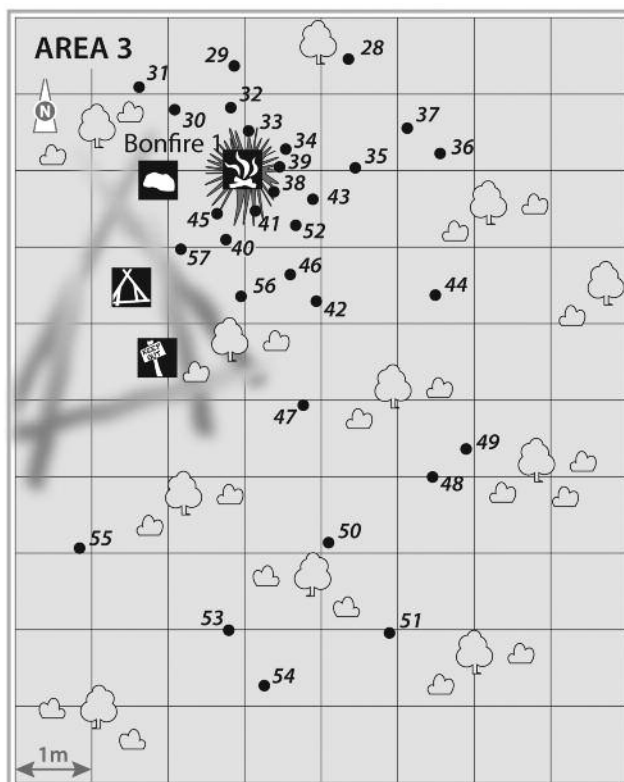
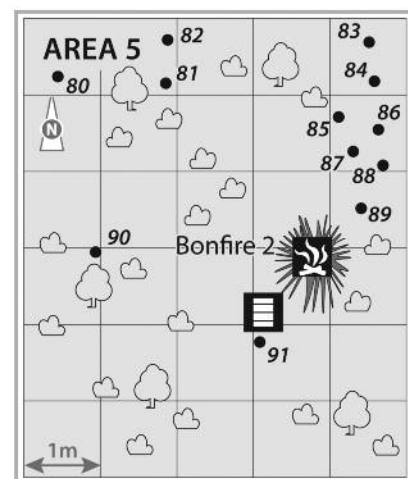
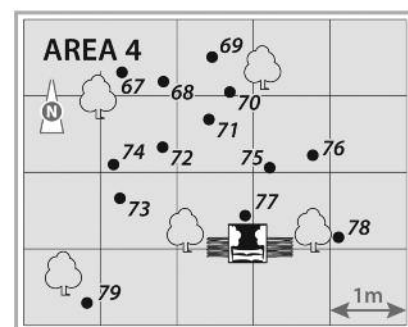
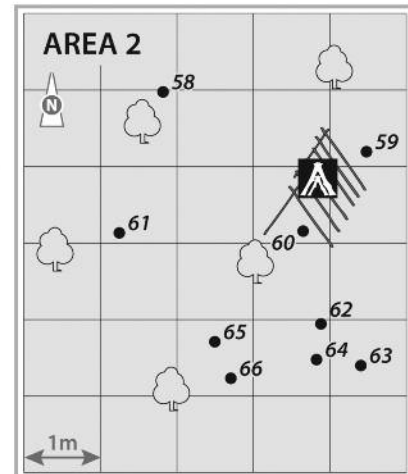
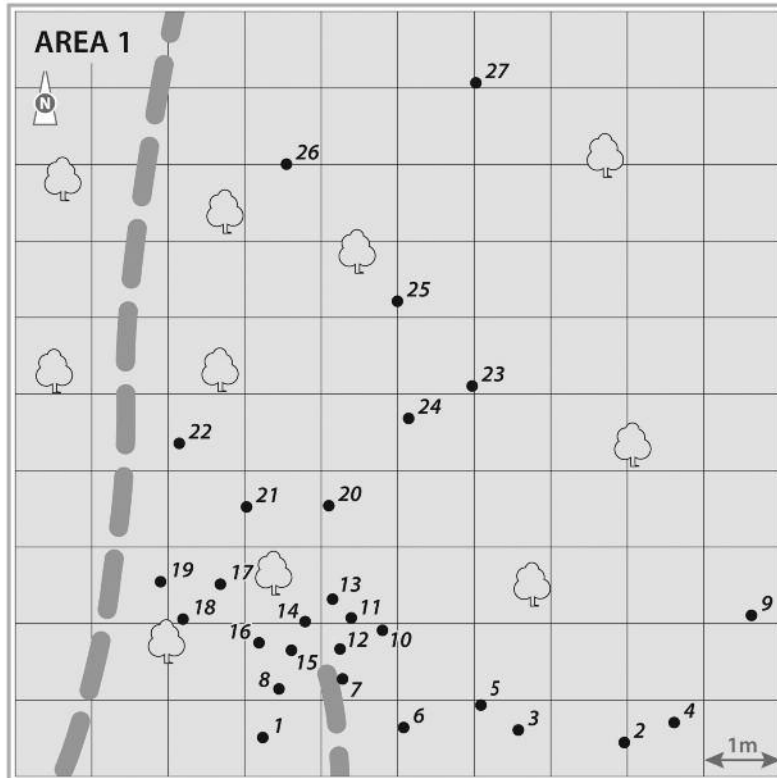
Area 4 seems much more likely to be inhabited on frequent occasions by the same lone person. The log seat has been made to last for some time. It has possibly been used as a place from which to shoot game, due to the high concentration of empty shotgun cartridges near it. This person appears to be much more of a 'loner' type figure, spending lengths of time stalking animals with a shotgun and spade (find 78) in a more isolated part of The Boffy.



# THE BOFFY

## Excavation areas

Excavation areas	AREA 2 5m x 6m
AREA 1 10m x 10m	AREA 4 5m x 4m
AREA 3 8m x 10m	AREA 5 5m x 6m

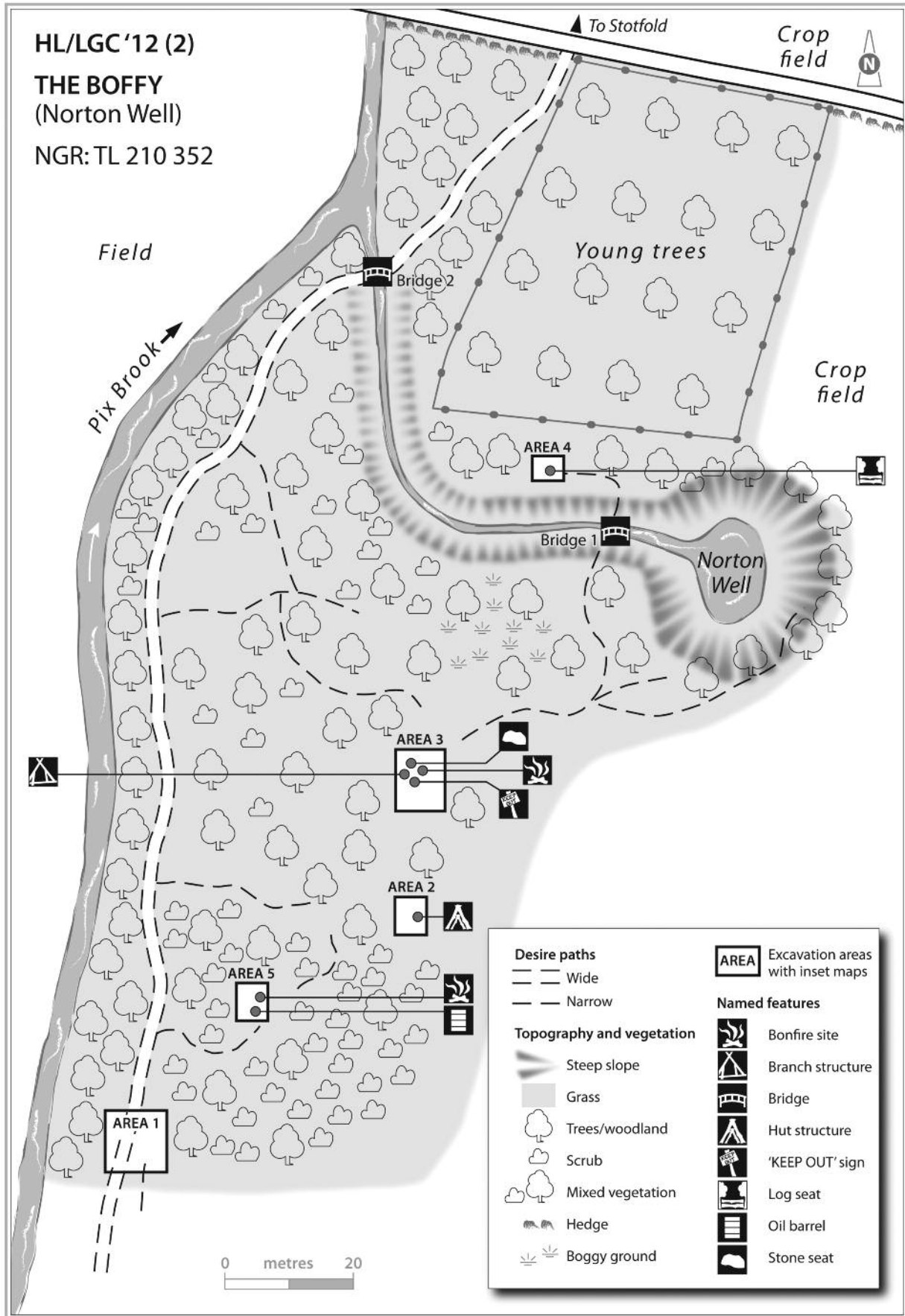


● 22	Find		Branch structure
	Desire path		Hut structure
	Grass		'KEEP OUT' sign
	Trees		Log seat
	Scrub		Oil barrel
	Bonfire site		Stone seat

HL/LGC '12 (2)

# THE BOFFY (Norton Well)

NGR: TL 210 352





## Site 3: Roman Camp (The Quarry)

I was told of this site through many different stories, most recalling childhood days spent sledging/biking/sliding up and down its steep banks. My interpretation of this image formed into a kind of hazy, frosted view of children laughing and joyfully playing in carefree abandon. In the dull, grey dampness of a November day in 2012 this vision quickly evaporates.

### Site Description

My first encounter with the old quarry at the top of Wilbury Hills was almost by accident. Busy investigating the car park, on a spur-of-the-moment impulse I cross the road and walk by the hedgerow running alongside the quarry. Tentatively peering through several gaps in the hedge, I notice its steepness. Moving through a curtain of undergrowth, I am suddenly looking down into a deep cavern in the earth. The contrast from the wide rolling hills surrounding it is disorientating. The chaotic growth of trees and scrub, tangled and woven, and a carpet of thick ivy on the near vertical slope, make the whole view jungle-like, untamed, wild and of some other place completely. For some reason I feel struck by a fear. Looking down is alarming. With no indication of where the bottom lies, I feel I am peering into a bottomless black hole that can only lead to something dreadful. I try to be brave and attempt scampering down using roots and branches to stop myself falling in. The fear that I might tumble in and never get out, trapped along with whatever else might have collected at its bottom, is too overwhelming. I retreat, somewhat astonished that such a wilderness can exist so quietly on the edge of town.

### Mapping the Site

Slowly, over the course of several visits, I arrange the layout of the quarry in my mind, starting from its few ways in. Approaching from the Icknield Way side by the bus stop, there is a much more manageable way down. The slopes on the north-east side are slightly shallower and the overgrowth is not quite so enclosing or hazardous. This side feels tamer and brighter and I can still see the sky at least. The series of pathways in are still heavily overgrown and many lead eventually to an impassable end. Gaining an overall view of the site is quite impossible, so much has to be filled in from my imagination.

### Roman Camp Finds

Categories*	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5
Building material	1				
Car	1	1			
Celebration			1		
Disposable bag	1		16		1
Drinks container	7	8	4	4	8
Electrical				1	
Food packaging	8			5	3
Freezing			1		
Insulation	1				
Medical				1	1
Natural			1		
Packing			3		
Personal Hygiene	2		1	1	
Recreation	1		2	2	
Recycling					1
Roofing		1			
Tableware		3		1	
Unidentified	12	5	17	3	3

**Table 3: Site 3 find categories**

\*Finds may exist in more than one category, for example, a body spray aerosol can will come under both personal hygiene and recreation as it may be used for both scenting the body and substance abuse.

### Find Category Analysis

The finds at Site 3 vary quite considerably from previous sites. There is evidence of links to a wider variety of activities and sources, such as building material, insulation, roofing and freezing. There is the presence of household appliances, such as a fridge/freezer and an oven door. This indicates possible use of the site for fly tipping and a place to hide the larger unwanted items of everyday life. Some of these appear to have been adapted into items for recreational activities, such as to slide down the banks on.

There is some evidence of occupancy through drinks containers and food packaging, but much of this material appears (by weathering and sun bleaching) to have been left for some time undisturbed. The oldest date of an object found was a drinks can with a BBE date '06.85' (find 209).

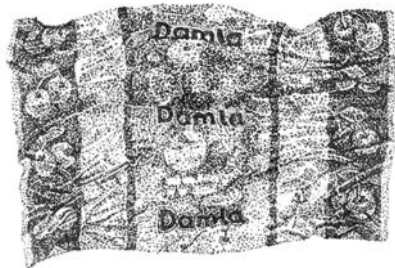


Fig 5: Find 192, 'Damla' sweet wrapper found in area 4

There were slightly more alcoholic drinks containers found than non-alcoholic, and many of these were bottle shards (fig 5). Much of the food-related finds were sweet, with only two savoury items throughout the whole site (although five were unidentifiable as either). The sweet food was made up of chocolate bars and some boiled sweets. Notably, two sweet wrappers were found from a sweet called 'Damla' (finds 192 (fig 4) and 196). These are Turkish sweets unavailable in the UK.

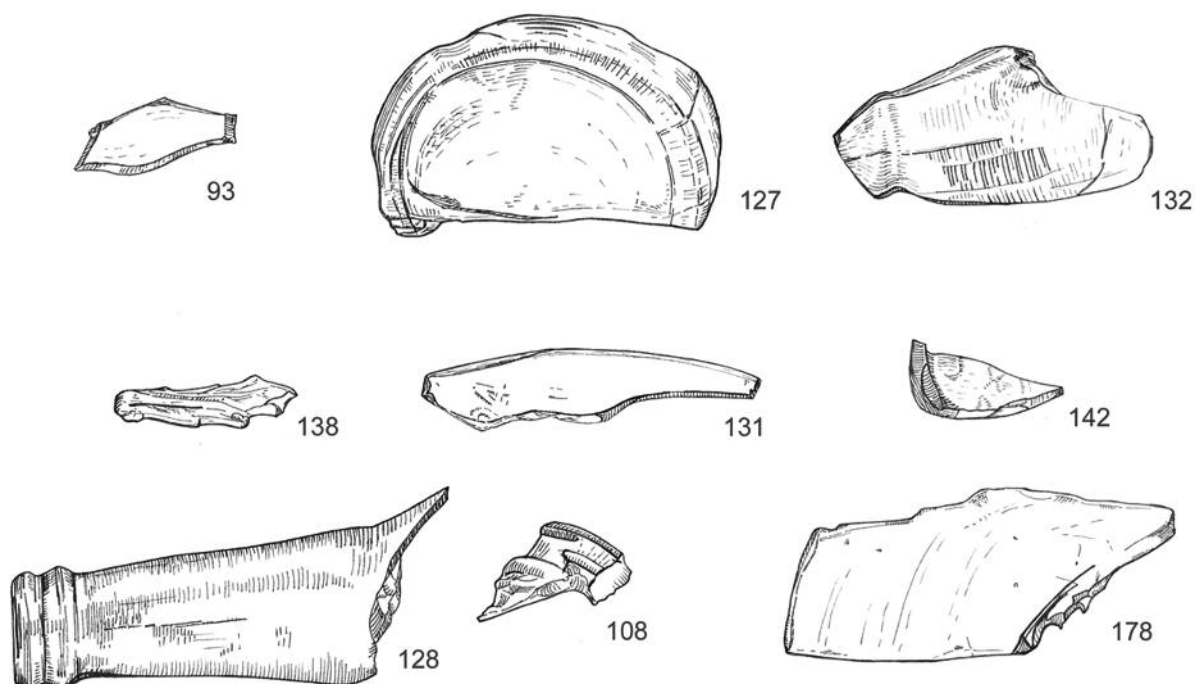


Plate 5: Find 209, drinks can 'Lilt' found in area 5

## Discussion

From the nature and age of the finds at Roman Camp, I am led to conclude that this site seems to have undergone some significant changes in use. From a time of more human activity in the recent past, to a gradual diminishing to the present point, where occupancy is limited. The rise of the undergrowth, unkempt and unmanaged, has led to a claim over the site by more natural forces, and human presence seems to have been largely repelled.

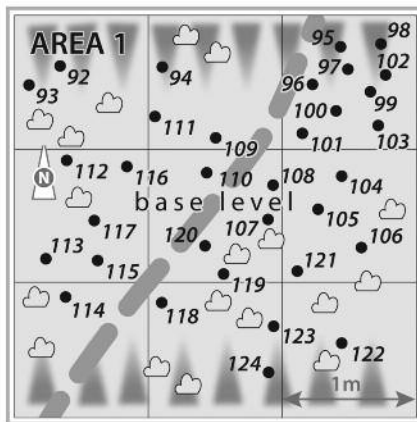
Fig 6 : Roman Camp (quarry) glass shards





## ROMAN CAMP

### Excavation areas



AREA 1 3m x 3m

Excavation areas

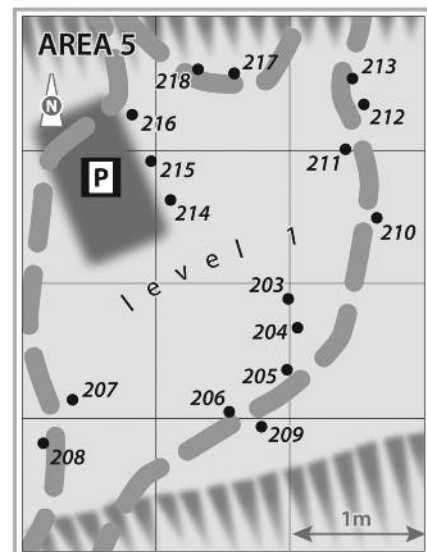
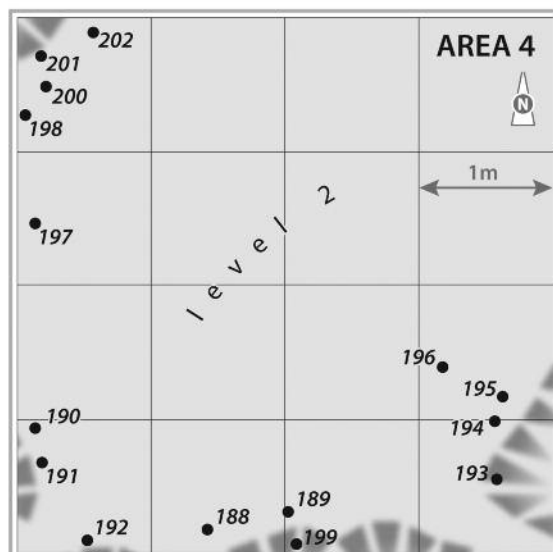
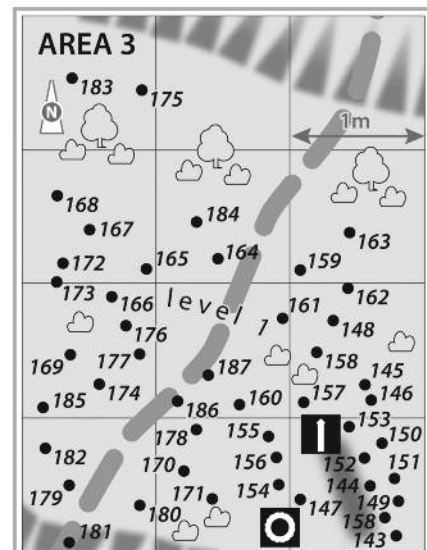
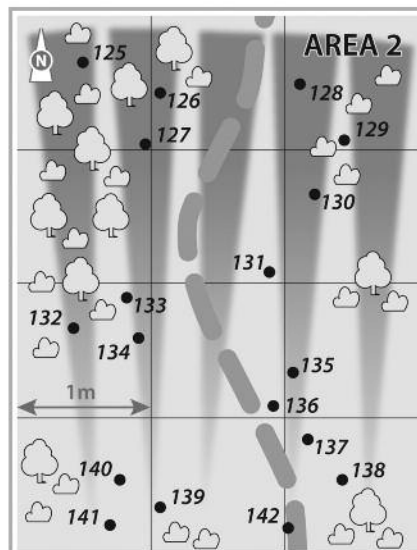
AREA 2 3m x 4m

AREA 3 3m x 4m

AREA 4 4m x 4m

AREA 5 3m x 4m

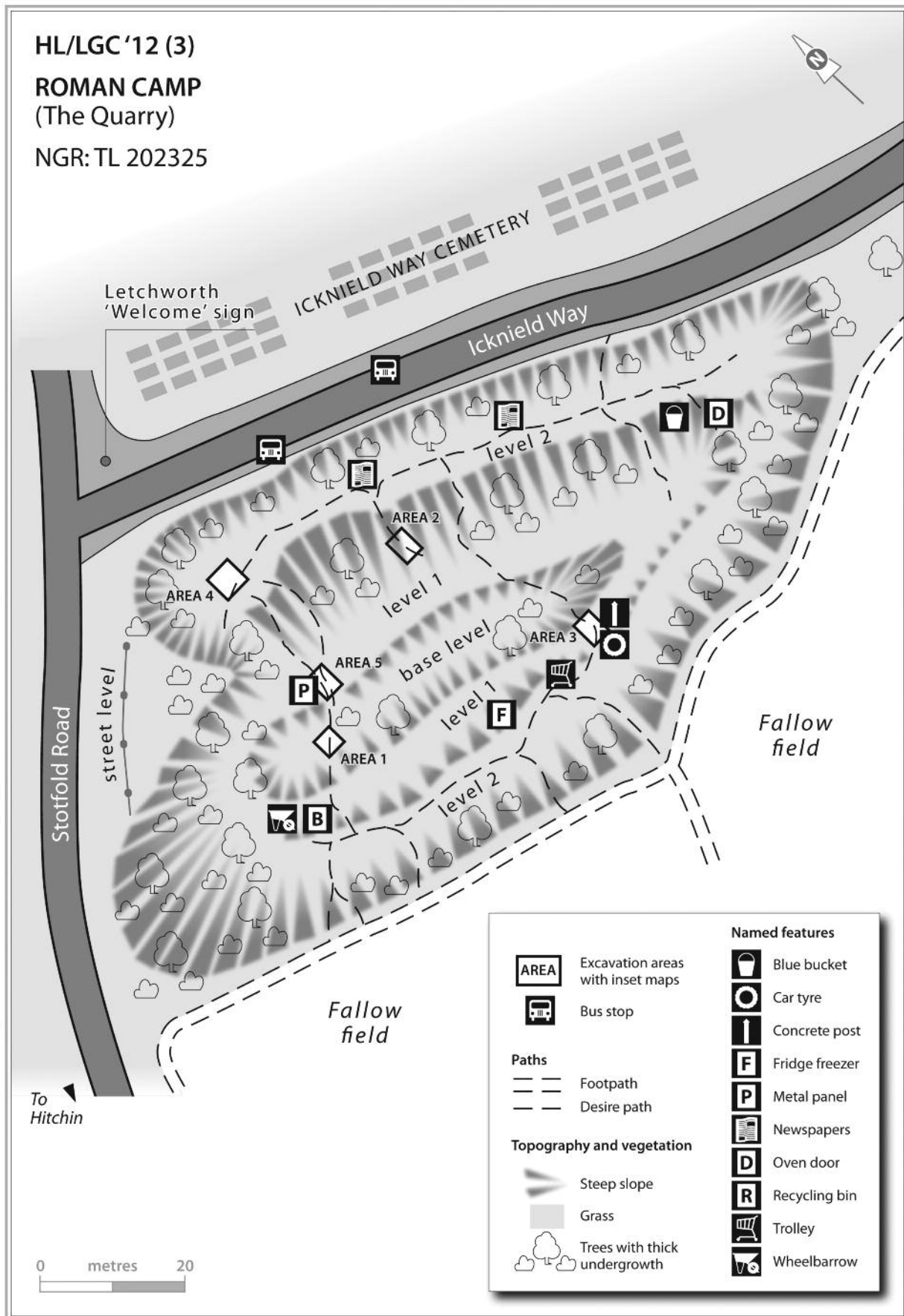
- 22 Find
- Desire path
- Steep slope
- Grass
- Trees with thick undergrowth
- Car tyre
- Concrete post
- Metal panel



HL/LGC '12 (3)

# ROMAN CAMP (The Quarry)

NGR: TL 202325





## Site 6: The Placebo Underpass

Site 6 is an underpass that sits underneath the A1(M) motorway between Letchworth Garden City and Baldock, and is a regularly used footpath and part of the Greenway route.

### Site Description

My initial field-walking visit to this site presented a burnt out Escort van located almost in the centre of the site (plate 6). However, by the time I came to excavate, this item had been removed and much of the debris cleared.



**Plate 6: Burnt-out Escort van found during field-walking expedition**

Thirty metres in length, with a curb on both sides, the site largely appears to be a road. However, there are no roads accessing it, so it is usually experienced on foot. There is no lighting within the underpass tunnel, therefore vision quality is reduced at its central point. There is a constant roar of traffic overhead that echoes within the interior. The footpath either side of the underpass slopes up, and on the west side bends round so you can only see inside once close to it. Down both interior walls (north and south) there is a heavy covering of graffiti in a number of different colours and styles.

### Wall Excavation

I spend much of my efforts analysing this wall art, considering the use of language and imagery to help me establish who spends time producing it and what their motivation might be.

I also use a method in which I attempt to break up the different markings into layers, so that I might see the work as it developed over time. I do this by isolating each individual marking and trying to identify what it overlays and what it appears on top of. The layers are coded, with (a) indicating the earliest time. This is such a slow process that I have only completed the north wall for this project, therefore my findings are, at this point, incomplete. However, they do begin to highlight trends and the personas of the artists and allow an initial interpretation of their relationship to the space and each other.



**Fig 7: 'Herbal Tribe' markings, panel 1/8, north wall**

### Identified Groups and Personalities

Through this method, I manage to uncover a number of different 'voices' that exist on the north wall and often come up multiple times throughout the 30-metre expanse. I even manage to identify likely conversations that appear to exist only through the language of graffiti.

#### *Gay Boy*

This particular character is the most dominant of all and appears in some form on each of the eight panels. He usually uses black and has a hurried hand that frequently works over the top of other artists' work. This seems to be a key motivation for him. There appears to be a progression in his work from panel 1, in which he uses the name 'Gay Boy' in a more derogatory manner, to panel 8 in which he seems either to have transferred the perspective into the shoes of those he is slighting, or has moved on to make a statement/confession about his own sexual status (figs 8 and 9).



Fig 8: 'Gay Boy' markings, panel 2, north wall

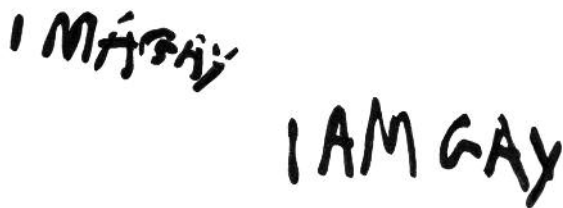


Fig 9: 'Gay Boy' markings, panel 8, north wall

#### Herbal Tribe

Another key voice on the wall is that of what seems to be a group, who I have named 'Herbal Tribe'. Much of their language, signatures and timing appear to be interlinked and it is often difficult to decipher between works. There is, however, a clear identification through the language and styles used, of a trend favouring cannabis-related imagery and words, including a small poem on panel 2 (fig 10).



Fig 10: 'Herbal tribe' markings, panel 2, north wall, 'I was ere/But Now im Not/Im at Home smokin Pot'

Signatures of artists within Herbal Tribe include what appears to be: Nozej, Seckoe (Sec), DPS, DDT and Plops. However, it is at times difficult to determine whether these are different people or a person using more than one signature. The style of lettering does seem to be very similar.

#### Other Voices

As well as these two dominant personalities, there are other noteworthy voices. The largest piece on this wall is the word 'PLACEBO', written in approximately six-foot capital letters, in white, with what seems to be a household paintbrush. The dominance of this word within the tunnel led me to call this site by that name. I am assuming that the word refers to the English alternative rock band, rather than the use of a medically ineffectual drug. These letters seem to be quite an early feature upon the wall.

Plate 7: Hand print on panel 6

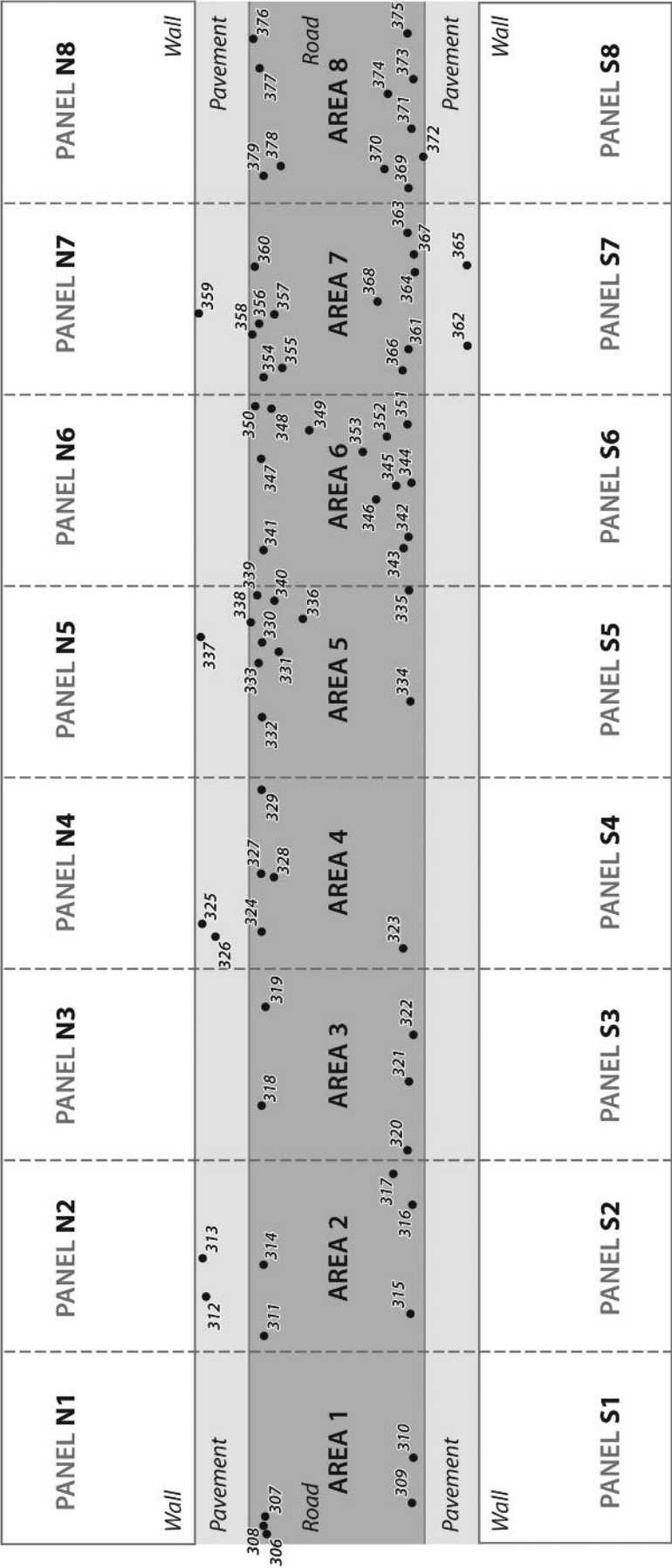


Other marks I want to mention are the presence of several hand prints made in light blue household emulsion (find 335). These appear along with a large area of splashed paint that would have been created by the motion of throwing the contents from the container.

#### Discussion

Site 6 is very active and seems to promote the illegal activity of graffiti, even though it would at certain times be a fairly busy thoroughfare. It is probably safe to assume that inside certain times (possibly late in the evening) people, prepped with materials, seize the opportunity to make their mark. This activity apparently coincides (indicated through the finds) with the consumption of alcohol and smoking of cigarettes. However, the site as a whole appears to be very much focused on self-expression and the creation of personas. The language and style often appear to have underlying meanings and code, giving an indication of a world of interaction that cannot necessarily be accessed as an outsider.

HL/LGC '12 (6)  
PLACEBO UNDERPASS  
NGR: TL 239332





## Conclusions

Through the data from the four sites studied as part of this project, I am able to begin to make certain assumptions about their uses and users. This has enabled me to start to piece together a number of characteristics to consider in analysing this territory.

Within the data there is a strong indication of youth. This conclusion was reached after considering a number of factors. Firstly, the presence of high quantities of chocolate and sweet-related finds (almost 50 per cent of food packaging found) over all the sites. It is widely acknowledged by scientists that children crave sweeter foods than adults (Ventura and Mennella 2011\*). Secondly, a number of finds specifically associated with child/adolescent play, for example, find 220 (Pokemon Taz disc), find 261 (glow stick) and find 51 (drinks can with ball-bearing shot holes). Thirdly, there were objects relating to education, notably finds 257, 258, 272, 273, 274, 276, 277, 278, 279, 301 and 304 (the fragments of burnt school book pages). Fourthly, it is likely to be the case that the feature found in area two at The Boffy (Site 2), was created through the activity of den-making, which is widely associated with childhood play.

Alongside these indications of children, there are the signs of the more rebellious pursuits that point to the presence of teenagers and young adults. The findings do not provide absolute proof of identity, but, given their location, hint towards a need to conceal. This in itself highlights certain factors as to why these things might be forbidden. An example of this may be, considering find 228 (condom wrapper), the lack of available private space teenagers might have in which to experiment with recently discovered sexual desires. This theory would also be strengthened by the presence of alcohol-related finds (59 in total). As the drinking of alcohol is strictly prohibited for under 18s, these hidden places offer an opportunity to consume it more freely.

Another conclusion arising from the data is the act of people gathering in social groups. The presence of bonfires (and a heavy concentration of broken/burnt bottles) at The Pudding Basin and The Boffy (Sites 1 and 2), and possibly the group-tagging graffiti found at the Placebo Underpass (Site 6), indicate celebratory and even performative behaviour.

Illegal pursuits were also evident within these places, including fly-tipping at Roman Camp (Site 3); graffiti at Placebo Underpass (Site 6), and class A drug use at The Pudding Basin (Site 1) (finds 247, 262 and 265). I would assume that these particular pursuits (aside from the graffiti) were potentially

more likely to be carried out alone, but there is no solid evidence of the identity of the culprits.

There is also extensive evidence indicative of a creative drive through a number of the pursuits carried out at the sites. Site 2 contains a number of features: the hut structure, the branch structure, two bridges and a log seat, that show an aptitude for design and craft. Placebo Underpass (Site 6) evidences a strong drive for self expression and the communication of ideas. In one marking, the artist voices the simple yet poignant request 'SEE ME!'.



Fig 11, 'Herbal Tribe' markings, panel 5, north wall, 'SEE ME'

This initial report of the data gathered as part of the Hidden Landscapes Project, gives a first introductory glimpse into what proves to be an extremely complex and contradictory area of land. These places, hidden between our urban and rural landscape, contain many mysteries. The data from the excavations carried out at the four sites, has highlighted a number of key areas of discussion, and has enabled me to put forward a brief description of who the inhabitants of this territory might be.

Further investigation and research needs to be carried out regarding possible causes, motivations and influences, before more solid conclusions can be reached. However, it is possible at this point to conclude positively that these overlooked spaces offer considerable opportunities to some. Their concealment and complexity provide a space where urges, identities and relationships can be explored, that in more socially ordered spaces would be restricted. They therefore play an important and significant role in helping to understand and question the story of our town.

\*Ventura, Alison K. and Mennella, Julie A. Innate and Learned Preferences for Sweet Taste During Childhood, *Current Opinion in Nutrition and Metabolic Care*, July 2011, Vol. 14, Issue 4, pp, 379–384

## List of Finds

001	Crisp packet, brand 'Frazzles' (piece)	070	Shot gun cartridge (green)
002	Match box, brand 'Club Bingo'	071	Shot gun cartridge (green)
003	Sticky tape (piece)	072	Shot gun cartridge (green)
004	Crisp packet (piece)	073	Shot gun cartridge (green)
005	Purple bandage Tape (piece)	074	Shot gun cartridge (green)
006	White tissue (crumpled)	075	Shot gun cartridge (green)
007	Silver carton (flattened)	076	Bird skull
008	White tissue (crumpled)	077	Shot gun cartridge (green)
009	Ladies briefs, grey with pink detail	078	Rusted spade (not taken)
010	White bandage and purple bandage tape	079	Tree guard (piece)
011	Sweet corn tin, brand 'Green Giant'	080	Length of rope, grey (not collected)
012	Crisp packet, brand 'Snax'	081	Lemonade bottle (not collected)
013	Purple bandage tape (piece)	082	Milk bottle, brand 'Tesco' (2 pints)
014	White bandage, purple bandage tape and cotton wool	083	Rubbish bag containing crisp multi pack wrappers, plastic bag and animal poo (not collected)
015	Sun cream bottle with sun cream and purple bandage tape, brand E45	084	Clear film (piece)
016	Chocolate bar wrapper, brand 'Boost' (piece)	085	Cereal box, brand 'Frosties' (piece)
017	White tissue (crumpled)	086	Cereal box, brand 'Frosties' (piece)
018	White tissue (folded)	087	Jam jar with jam
019	Unidentified object	088	Plastic food container
020	Cup of Soup packet, brand 'Tesco' (chicken and vegetable)	089	Pen, brand 'Coral'
021	Corned beef tin, brand 'Princes' (containing small amount of corned beef)	090	Bungee rope with clips (suspended in tree) (not taken)
022	Purple bandage tape and white bandage material	091	Oil barrel containing milk carton, tins, drinks cans and foil tray (not taken)
023	Chocolate bar wrapper, brand 'Boost' (piece)	092	Drinks can, brand 'Cherry Coca Cola'
024	White tissue (folded)	093	Clear glass (shard)
025	Purple bandage tape and cotton wool	094	Unidentified plastic
026	White tissue (crumpled)	095	Hard plastic piece (broken)
027	Crisp packet, brand 'Snax'	096	Plastic bottle (no label)
028	Printed paper	097	Plastic wrapper (piece)
029	Unidentified object	098	String and plastic unidentified object
030	Silver wrapper	099	Drinks can, brand 'Red Stripe'
031	Lollipop stick	100	Chocolate bar wrapper, brand 'Rocky'
032	Black glass, burnt (shard)	101	Metal washer
033	Black glass, burnt (shard)	102	House brick (not taken)
034	Tin can, brand 'Fosters' (burnt)	103	Silver disc (not taken)
035	Biscuit wrapper (piece)	104	White plastic square sheet (not taken)
036	Sweet wrapper (piece)	105	Hard plastic piece (broken)
037	Bottle top, brand 'Coke Zone'	106	Sweet wrapper (piece)
038	Tin can, brand 'Fosters' (burnt)	107	Clear plastic film
039	Fork (rusted)	108	Clear glass (shard)
040	Bottle top, brand 'Pepsi'	109	Foil (piece)
041	Unidentified metal piece (burnt)	110	Foil (piece)
042	Cigarette packet, brand 'Super Kings'	111	Foil tray (squashed)
043	Black glass, burnt (shard)	112	Crisp packet, brand 'Nik Naks'
044	Feather (sample)	113	Aerosol, deodorant body spray, brand 'Superdrug'
045	Burnt wood (sample)	114	Disposable carrier bag, brand 'Nisa'
046	Glass (shard)	115	Drinks can, brand 'Dr Pepper'
047	Aerosol neck and top (burnt)	116	Yellow foil
048	Tree guard (piece)	117	Plastic water bottle (no label)
049	Silver foil	118	Chocolate bar wrapper (piece)
050	Black strap (piece)	119	Clear plastic wrap (piece)
051	Tin can, brand 'Emerge' (with shot holes)	120	Large metal object with rubber handles (not taken)
052	Tin can, brand 'Fosters' (burnt)	121	White plastic square sheet (not taken)
053	Tin can, brand 'Fosters'	122	High tension cable (broken)
054	Shot gun cartridge (black)	123	Sanitary towel wrapper (piece)
055	Lighter, brand 'Clipper' (green)	124	Orange foam (piece)
056	Brown glass, burnt (shard)	125	White hubcap (piece)
057	Clear glass bottle (shard)	126	Black rubber, tubular object (heavy)
058	Length of rope (yellow)	127	Clear glass bottle base
059	Crisp packet, brand 'Walkers' (nibbled)	128	Clear glass bottle neck
060	Length of rope (yellow)	129	Corrugated plastic (piece)
061	Cigarette packet, brand 'Benson & Hedges'	130	White plastic tube (piece)
062	Crisp packet (piece)	131	Clear glass (shard)
063	Crisp packet (piece)	132	Brown glass bottle (shard)
064	Crisp packet (piece)	133	Brown glass bottle (shard)
065	Crisp packet (piece)	134	White saucer (fragment)
066	Disposable carrier bag (piece)	135	Blue and white plate (fragment)
067	Shot gun cartridge (green)	136	Blue and white plate (fragment)
068	Shot gun cartridge (green)	137	Green plastic (piece)
069	Snail shell (sample)	138	Clear glass (shard)

139 White glass (shard)  
 140 White paint on small piece of wood  
 141 Plastic strip (piece)  
 142 Clear glass (shard)  
 143 Clear plastic (piece)  
 144 Clear film (piece)  
 145 Disposable carrier bag (piece)  
 146 White synthetic fibre  
 147 Polythene bag  
 148 Aerosol can, brand 'So cosmetics'  
 149 Disposable carrier bag (piece)  
 150 Disposable carrier bag, brand 'Sainsbury's' (piece)  
 151 Disposable carrier bag, brand 'Sainsbury's' (piece)  
 152 White and green plastic (piece)  
 153 Synthetic fibre (piece)  
 154 Disposable carrier bag (piece)  
 155 Disposable carrier bag (piece)  
 156 Disposable carrier bag (piece)  
 157 Disposable carrier bag (piece)  
 158 Mirror (shard)  
 159 Polystyrene (piece)  
 160 Ice cube tray  
 161 Disposable carrier bag (piece)  
 162 Blue plastic bottle top  
 163 Strap with stitch holes (piece)  
 164 Clear drinking straw packet  
 165 Black plastic (piece)  
 166 Disposable carrier bag (piece)  
 167 Clear firm plastic (piece)  
 168 Crumpled plastic with elasticated edge (piece)  
 169 Disposable carrier bag (piece)  
 170 Circular metal object with hole in centre section  
 171 Polystyrene (piece)  
 172 Crumpled plastic (piece)  
 173 Crumpled plastic with elasticated edge (piece)  
 174 Polystyrene (piece)  
 175 Cigar tin, brand 'Cafe Creme' (bent)  
 176 Disposable bin liner  
 177 White tile (piece)  
 178 Clear glass (shard)  
 179 Disposable carrier bag (piece)  
 180 Plastic bottle neck with white metal lid  
 181 Gold helium balloon (piece)  
 182 Clear plastic wrap (piece)  
 183 Disposable bin liner (piece)  
 184 Animal bone  
 185 Synthetic fibre (piece)  
 186 White plastic (piece)  
 187 Synthetic fibre (piece)  
 188 Drinks can, brand 'Dr Pepper'  
 189 Aerosol, deodorant body spray, brand 'Lynx PULSE'  
 190 Drinks can, brand 'K' (cider)  
 191 Sweet wrapper, strawberry sherbet  
 192 Sweet wrapper, brand 'Damla'  
 193 Tobacco packet, brand 'Golden Virginia'  
 194 Blue, plastic bottle lid  
 195 Chocolate bar wrapper, brand 'Mars Planets'  
 196 Sweet wrapper, brand 'Damla'  
 197 Blue surgical glove  
 198 Pink and white wire (piece)  
 199 Mug 'Disney: Piglet'  
 200 Chocolate bar wrapper, brand 'Mars'  
 201 White plastic (piece)  
 202 White plastic (piece)  
 203 Drinks can, brand 'Carlsberg'  
 204 White plastic (piece)  
 205 Clear plastic lid  
 206 Drinks can, brand 'Fosters'  
 207 Metal screw lid  
 208 Metal bar (rusted)  
 209 Drinks can, brand 'Lilt' (BBE 06.85)  
 210 Drinks can, brand 'Relentless' (energy drink)  
 211 Blue surgical glove  
 212 Clear plastic bottle (no label)

213 White plastic (piece)  
 214 Clear plastic bottle, base melted (no label)  
 215 Crisp packet (piece)  
 216 Chocolate bar wrapper, brand 'Fry's Turkish Delight'  
 217 Blue recycling box (piece)  
 218 Disposable carrier bag, brand 'Nisa'  
 219 Clear plastic bottle top  
 220 Pokemon Taz disc, brand 'Nintendo' (no. 194 'Wooper')  
 221 Metal cylindrical tube  
 222 Recordable CD, brand 'Traxdata' (blank)  
 223 Crisp packet, brand 'Walkers Sunbites' (piece)  
 224 Ice cream bar packet, brand 'Smarties'  
 225 Antiseptic wipe inside sealed packet, brand 'Tesco'  
 226 Crisp packet, brand 'Walkers Sunbites' (piece)  
 227 Metal cooking pot  
 228 Blue condom wrapper  
 229 Mackerel tin, brand 'Princes'  
 230 Clear plastic lid  
 231 Plastic ring handle  
 232 Chocolate bar wrapper, brand 'Mars'  
 233 Crisp packet, brand 'Skips' (melted)  
 234 White lid (stained pink inside)  
 235 Tea light candle case  
 236 Clear plastic casing  
 237 Syringe cap  
 238 White wrapper with blue text 'FOR EXTERNA ...' (piece)  
 239 Rubber ball (piece)  
 240 Bottle with lid, brand 'Ribena (plus)'  
 241 Plastic cylindrical tube  
 242 Purple lighter (broken)  
 243 Heel of shoe (broken)  
 244 White lighter with figure detail and text 'I'm on Santa's Naughty List'  
 245 Chocolate bar wrapper, brand 'Cadbury's Dairy Milk'  
 246 Silver foil (piece)  
 247 Syringe with text 'Use U-100 Insulin B-D' (piece)  
 248 Gold screw lid with text 'Keep upright when foil removed'  
 249 Plastic bottle, brand 'Heritage'  
 250 Red bottle lid (associated with find no. 249)  
 251 Silver foil, burnt (piece)  
 252 Blue flooring (piece)  
 253 Green lighter (burnt)  
 254 Aerosol can, deodorant body spray without spray nozzle, brand 'Ravage TUSK'  
 255 Golf ball (mangled)  
 256 Newspaper (burnt fragment)  
 257 Lined paper (burnt fragment)  
 258 Lined paper (burnt fragment)  
 259 Red condom wrapper  
 260 Aerosol can, lubricant, brand 'WD-40'  
 261 Yellow glow stick  
 262 Hypodermic syringe (with cap)  
 263 Plastic (piece)  
 264 Black plastic (piece)  
 265 Hypodermic syringe  
 266 Disposable carrier bag (piece)  
 267 Chocolate bar wrapper, brand 'Twix' (piece)  
 268 Foil (piece)  
 269 Clear glass bottle neck  
 270 Plastic (piece)  
 271 Glass bottle neck (shard)  
 272 Diary paper (fragment/burnt)  
 273 Squared paper (fragment/burnt) handwritten word 'Percentages'  
 274 Lined paper (burnt fragment)  
 275 Plastic (piece)  
 276 Lined paper (burnt fragment)  
 277 Lined paper (burnt fragment)  
 278 Lined paper (burnt fragment)  
 279 Blue card (burnt fragment)  
 280 Yellow plastic bottle top  
 281 Green plastic bottle top  
 282 Green glass (shard)  
 283 Green glass (shard)



284	Spray can nozzle	331	Unidentified black substance (burnt) (car related)
285	Cigarette filter	332	Green glass (shard)
286	Clear plastic tab (for resealing packet)	333	Thick, blackened glass (shard)
287	Brown glass bottle (shard) with label, brand 'Budweiser'	334	Brown glass bottle (shard) with white paint on one side
288	Green glass (shard)	335	Paint pot lid (light blue)
289	Metal screw cap	336	Unidentified object
290	Green glass (shard)	337	Yellow lighter (broken)
291	Metal bottle top, brand 'Carlsberg'	338	Cigarette butt
292	Metal screw cap	339	Cigarette butt
293	Glass bottle (shard), brand 'Carlsberg'	340	Clear glass (shard)
294	Aerosol can, glitter spray, brand 'The Rapide'	341	Unidentified object
295	Metal bottle top, brand 'Panache'	342	Metal bottle top, brand 'Stella Artois'
296	Metal wire (piece)	343	Metal bottle top, brand 'Stella Artois'
297	Clear glass (shard)	344	Green glass (shard)
298	White plastic wrap (piece)	345	Green glass (shard)
299	Metal tent peg	346	Green glass (shard)
300	Metal tent peg	347	Paper, order number ticket (no. 19)
301	Lined paper (burnt fragment)	348	Dried paint (light blue)
302	Plastic (piece)	349	Dried paint (light blue)
303	Newspaper (fragment)	350	Red lighter (piece)
304	Lined paper (burnt fragment)	351	Red and white drinking straw
305	Newspaper (fragment)	352	Metal ring pull
306	Foil chewing gum wrapper	353	Brown glass (shard)
307	Metal screw cap	354	Orange reflector
308	Train ticket	355	Green glass bottle mouth (shard)
309	Clear glass bottle (shard) with label, brand 'Imperial Vodka'	356	Chocolate bar wrapper, brand 'Galaxy' (piece)
310	Cigarette paper packet, brand 'Bull'	357	Silver foil (piece)
311	Metal studded strip (burnt)	358	Metal screw bolt
312	Cigarette packet, brand 'Amber Leaf'	359	Chocolate bar wrapper, brand 'Snickers' (piece)
313	Paper taxi receipt (A3 Taxis 22/11/12, Hitchin Station to Baldock £12.70)	360	White, metal bottle top
314	Metal bottle top, brand 'Stella Artois'	361	Metal bottle top, brand 'Gaymers'
315	Four pack plastic rings	362	Metal bottle top, brand 'Carlsberg'
316	Leaflet 'Halifax'	363	Dried paint (light blue)
317	Cigarette butt	364	Purple lighter (broken)
318	White metal bottle top	365	Cable tie
319	Wire and plastic (piece)	366	Cigarette butt
320	Paint pot lid (green)	367	Unidentified object
321	Metal plate (burnt)	368	Dried paint (white)
322	Filter (car related)	369	Metal screw cap, brand 'Jacques'
323	Dried green paint (fragment)	370	Plastic object (unidentified)
324	Metal bottle top, brand 'Brothers'	371	Two pence coin (2008)
325	Metal bottle top, brand 'Gaymers'	372	White metal bottle top
326	Metal bottle top, brand 'Carlsberg'	373	White metal bottle top
327	Cigarette butt	374	Cigarette butt
328	Cigarette butt	375	Plastic object (unidentified) – similar to find no. 370
329	Car headlight bulb	376	Blue lighter (piece)
330	Unidentified black substance (burnt) (car related)	377	Blue plastic bottle top
		378	Chocolate bar wrapper, brand 'Cadbury's' (piece)
		379	Blue bank card (piece)

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