

**YCCART 2019/Y17**

**Trial pitting at Stallard's Batch, Goblin Coombe Farm, Cleeve**

**YATTON, CONGRESBURY, CLAVERHAM AND CLEEVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
RESEARCH TEAM (YCCART)**

*General Editor: Vince Russett*



Trial pitting at Stallards Batch

*Cleeve, Trial pitting, Stallard's Batch at Goblin Coombe Farm, 2019, Y17, v 1*

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## **Abstract**

*In view of the large number of finds, largely of Roman date, from Stallard's Batch, geophysical surveys were carried out in 2006 and 2016. Neither was successful in finding any substantial Roman building, so an alternative approach, trial pitting, was tried. This, too, was unsuccessful in finding any substantial buildings. The range of pottery found was not great, and there were virtually no fine wares. The nature and location of Roman activity at the Batch remains elusive.*

## **Acknowledgements**

This survey could also not have been carried out without the willing permission of the landowners, David and Anne Ridley.

The authors are grateful for the hard work by the members of YCCCART in performing the surveys and Vince Russett for editing.

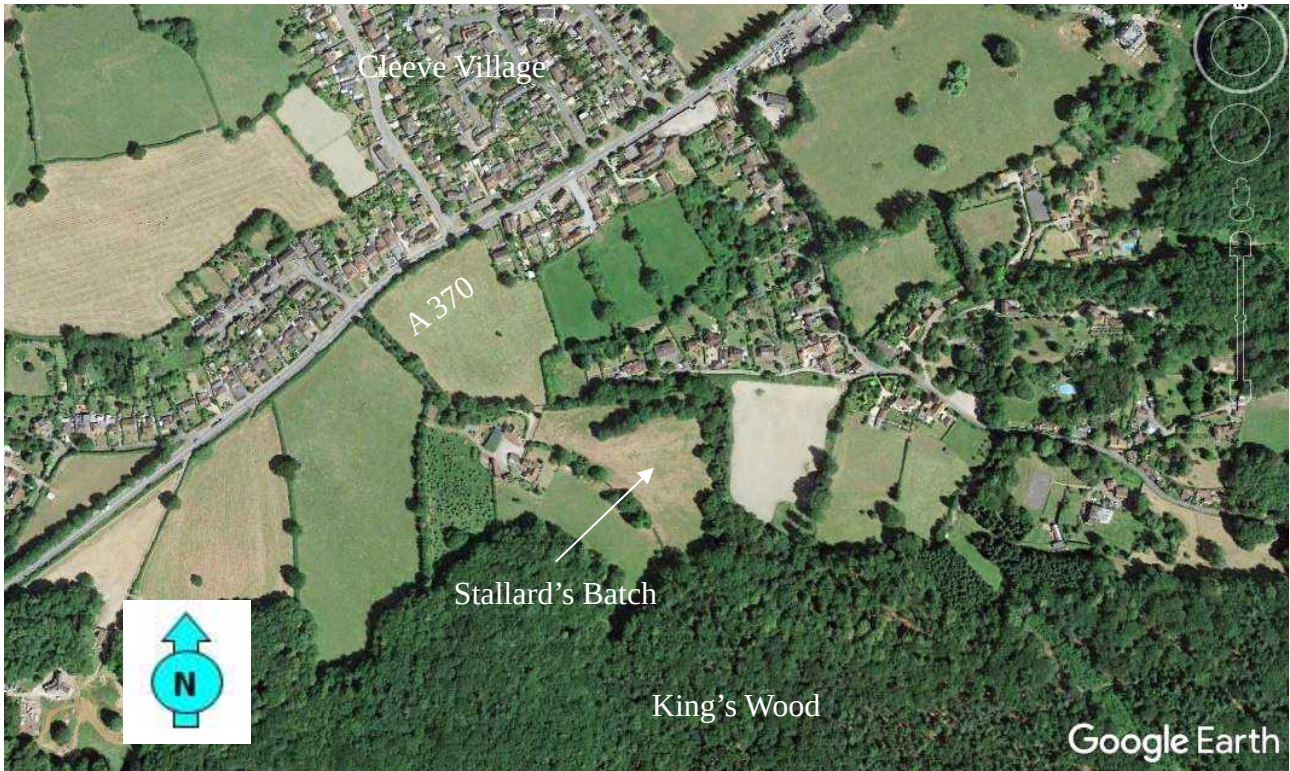
## **Introduction**

Yatton, Congresbury, Claverham and Cleve Archaeological Research Team (YCCCART) is one of a number of Community Archaeology teams across northern Somerset, formerly supported by the North Somerset Council Development Management Team.

Our objective is to undertake archaeological fieldwork to enable a better understanding and management of the heritage of the area while recording and publishing the activities and locations of the research carried out.



## Site location



*Fig 1: Location of Stallard's Batch*

Stallard's Batch is a knoll lying at ST45626529, above the village of Cleeve, in North Somerset. It has extensive views to the west and north, as far as the Brecon Beacons on clear days. The immediately adjacent late medieval Goblin Coombe Farmhouse is Listed Grade II. The site lies immediately adjacent to the King's Wood and Urchin Wood SSSI (adopted September 1992).

### **Land use and geology**

The site forms a spur of the metalliferous Clifton Down limestones. There is superficial quarrying at the northern end of the Batch for hard stone, and previous mining to the north-east, backfilled in the 20th century. The site is calcareous grassland used as pasture, with some light woodland on the north edge of the spur. It is crossed by three footpaths, from which the whole site can be seen.

## **Historical & archaeological context**

This has been previously extensively discussed in earlier reports on this web site ([http://www.ycccart.co.uk/index\\_htm\\_files/Cleeve%20Geophysical%20surveys%20Goblin%20Coombe%20Farm%202018-Y4%20v1.pdf](http://www.ycccart.co.uk/index_htm_files/Cleeve%20Geophysical%20surveys%20Goblin%20Coombe%20Farm%202018-Y4%20v1.pdf))

## **Survey objectives**

Extensive numbers of finds of Roman date have been found on and around Stallard's Batch, but as yet, no structures of Roman date have been found by geophysical survey. To attempt to locate possible clusters of finds that might indicate the location of Roman occupation or activity, an alternative approach (trial pitting) was adopted (see below).

## **Methodology**

The survey of the fields was undertaken during the period July to December 2017 by teams from YCCCART.

The method used was to cut 1m trial pits down to the natural, initially at locations intended to be on a grid across the site, but later adjusted to target areas thought most probably the site of occupation.

No stratigraphy (other than turf and topsoil over natural limestone) was observed in any trial pit.

The report was written in Libre Office 5 Writer.

Photographs were taken by members of YCCCART, and remain the copyright of YCCCART.

## Results

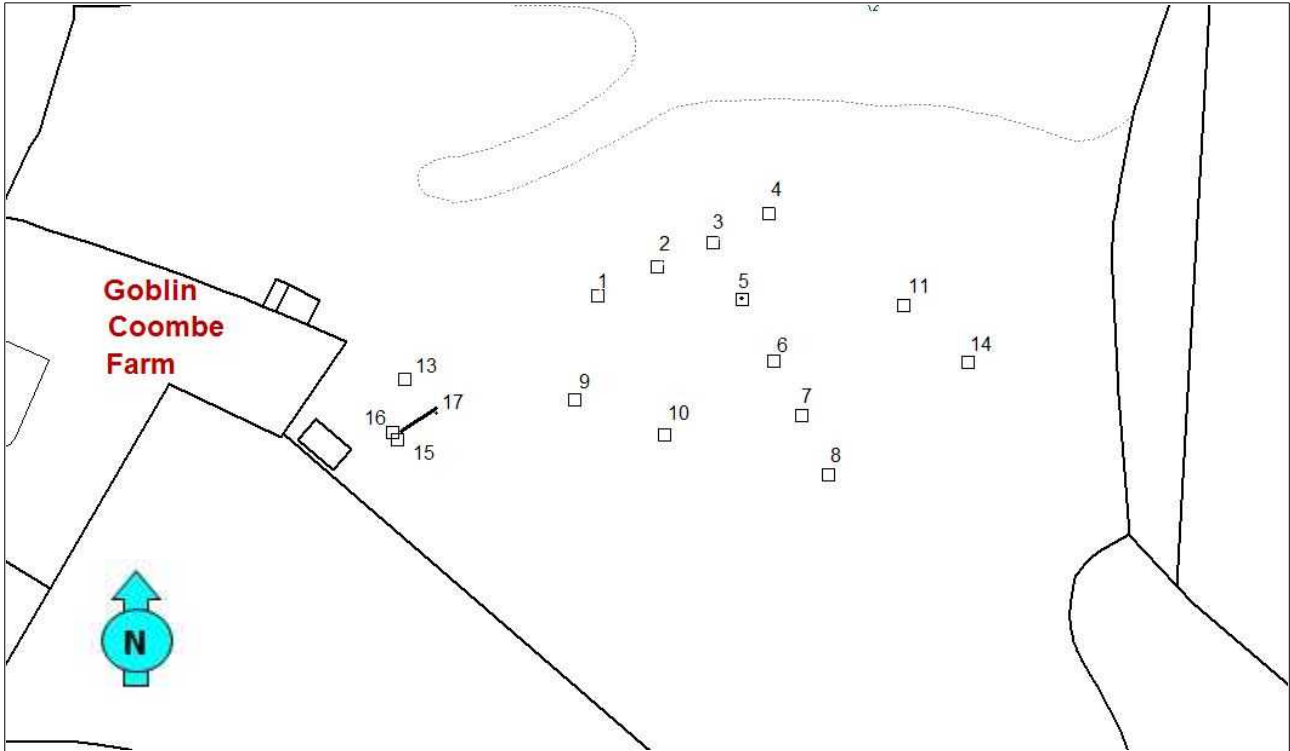


Fig 2: Location of trial pits on Stallard's Batch

The finds from the various trial pits are assessed and discussed below. Pits 1-8 were sited on a chosen grid: pits 9 and 10 in potential house platforms beside the public right of way: 11 & 14 on potential sites from the geophysical surveys, and pits 13 and 15-17 in an area where Roman material has been found in the past. The number 12 was omitted by mistake.

Various attempts to plot the distribution of finds to attempt to recover trends across the site, and thus possibly occupation or activity, were unsuccessful.

An example is given below (Fig 3). The total number of sherds in each pit of Congresbury Ware was plotted, with number of sherds, and number by circle area. Pits yielding less than 10 sherds are shown as yellow dots.

Apart from a concentration of sherds in trenches 13 and 15-17 (which concentration had been known previously) and two unexplained hot spots on the level top of the Batch, most pits produced less than 10 sherds. None of the pits producing larger quantities of GC4 had any indication of occupation otherwise, and none coincided with potential targets on the geophysical surveys.

The potential meaning of this is discussed briefly below.

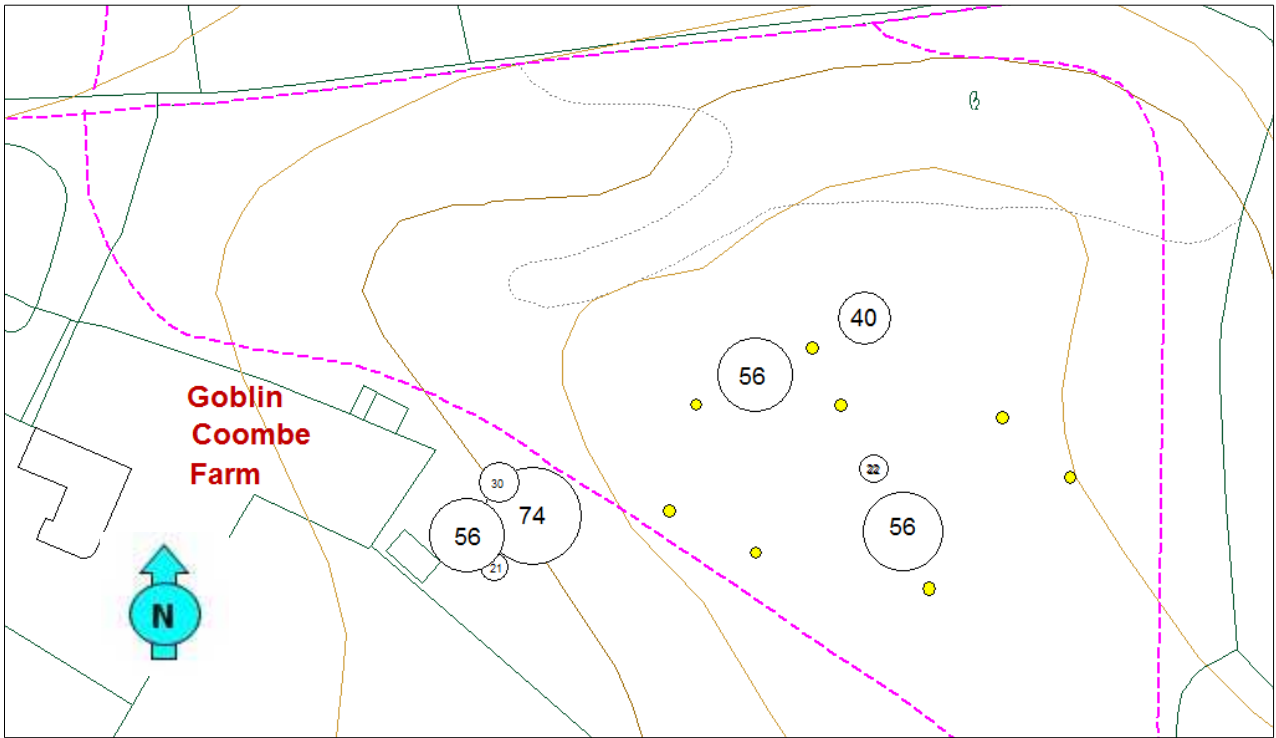


Fig 3: Distribution by number of sherds of fabric GC4 (Congresbury Ware) at Stallard's Batch, 2017



## Interim discussion of finds

### Overall totals

	Total	Weight (g)	Aver. (g)	% by weight	% by number
GC1	16	94.1	5.88	3.62	2.91
GC2	1	1.5	1.5	0.04	0.18
GC3	92	397	4.32	5.31	16.76
GC4	430	2062.2	4.80	79.4	78.32
GC5	5	4.4	0.08	0.17	0.9
GC6	4	23.6	5.9	0.04	0.7
GC7	2	5.4	2.7	4.91	0.4
GC8	1	0.4	0.4	0.01	0.2
GC9	2	8.5	4.3	0.04	0.4
Total	549	2597.1	4.73		

(see Appendix 2 below for full explanation of GC numbers)

The pottery from Goblin Coombe Farm is dominated by the products of Congresbury (78.3% by number; 79.4% by weight), followed by Dorset BB1 (16.76 by number; 5.31 % by weight). The BB1 sherds are strikingly smaller than their Congresbury counterparts by weight.

A local fabric found appears to be late Iron Age, in which fabric both a bead rim and a rounded splayed foot were found. This fabric, although only consisting of 16 sherds, has survived rather better than the BB1.

Overall, the mean sherd size at 4.73 grams reflects their origin as scatter, not occupation: trenches 1, 2, 7, 8/1, 13, 15 and 17 are the only ones containing more than one base sherd and rim sherds. Their distribution seemed to be of interest in looking for the elusive Roman occupation, but this was not so. The distribution of Congresbury Ware also proved ineffective (see above).

The almost total absence of Roman fine wares is also illuminating, with no figured Samian (the one foot stamp is currently with a consultant), and less than 5 other sherds that might be regarded as fine wares.

A suggestion has been made (by me) that this might have been something like a fair site in Roman times (on account of the large number of coins and metal work found), and this still seems like a reasonable explanation of the huge scatter of finds (although at least one steelyard fragment might have been expected, and the Roman quern needs to be explained). The lack of large amounts of slag, and the largely negative gradiometer results presumably rules out Roman iron smelting in the vicinity, although it is possible this site

was a workers camp of a kind familiar from the 19th century, with low status wooden buildings and facilities.

A tiny scrap of Shepton Mallet mortarium came from trench 2, and a sherd of Shepton tankard handle from trench 13. A few small scraps of what may be Severn Valley ware were found, but they were too small to be certain. This is about as exotic as the pottery at Goblin Coombe Farm seems to get.

### **Recommendations for further work**

None at present

### **Authors**

Vince Russett 2019-07-26

## Appendix 1

### Analysis of finds by trench

#### Trench 1

Fabric	No. sherds	Wt. sherds	Av sherd	Notes
GC3	5	38.6	7.7	3 flared jar rims, 1 flanged bowl rim
GC4	9	57.6	7.2	3 jar rims
GC5	1	1.9	1.9	
Total	15	98.1	6.54	

#### Metal

1 square shanked iron nail, 6.0cm

#### Bone

1 frag, 2.6g

#### Stone

1 frag PS, 93.8g

#### Glass

1 frag amber bottle fragment (modern)

#### Trench 2

Fabric	No. sherds	Wt. sherds	Av sherd	Notes
GC3	15	33.3	2.2	Inc 1 flared jar rim
GC4	56	191.4	3.4	Inc 1 small base and 1 rim of small jars
GC6	1	15.2		Rim of small bowl, internally glazed
GC7	1	1.8		Grits in place
Trap	5	11.0		One rounded rim. Suspect this is SV ware, but too small to be sure
Total	78	252.7	3.23	

#### Bone

4 small frags; 3 sheep's teeth. 18.5g

Stone

1 frag PS. 107.3g

Glass

1 sliver green post-med bottle glass. 2.9g

### Trench 3

Fabric	No. sherds	Wt. sherds	Av sherd	Notes
GC3	4	8.8	2.2	
GC4	5	29.2	5.8	1 jar rim sherd
Total	9	38	4.2	

### Trench 4

Fabric	No. sherds	Wt. sherds	Av sherd	Notes
GC3	1	2.2		
GC4	40	153.4	3.8	inc one small flared jar rim
Total	41	155.6	3.8	

Metal

1 hand-made Fe nail, asymmetric head. 4.9cm

1 Fe staple, broad head

### Trench 5

Fabric	No. sherds	Wt. sherds	Av sherd	Notes
GC4	4	4.5	1.1	
Total	4	4.5	1.13	

Bone

1 tiny sliver. 0.8g

### Trench 6

Fabric	No. sherds	Wt. sherds	Av sherd	Notes
GC3	3	9.9	3.3	Inc 1 fragment of flanged bowl
GC4	22	73.9	3.35	Inc 2 rims, one thickened
GC6	3	8.4	2.8	2 rounded rims with traces of slip/glaze
GC8	1	0.4		Clay pipe
Total	29	92.6	3.19	

### Bone

3 frags of one tooth (sheep). 1.4g

### Stone

1 rough disc of PS. 71.9g

## Trench 7

Note: Field labels Tr7 and Tr 7/2 combined, as they denote working days, not stratigraphy

Fabric	No. sherds	Wt. sherds	Av sherd	Notes
GC1	2	3.5	1.8	Body sherds
GC3	12	82.4	6.9	Includes 4 everted jar rim sherds, and 1 dog dish.
GC4	56	217.7	3.9	Inc. 5 rim sherds and 1 colander sherd
Trap	2	1.7	0.9	Same fabric as in Trap for Trench 16
Total	72	305.3	4.24	

### Metal

1 frag heavy iron strap, three small pierced holes. Very heavily corroded.

1 nail, very small head, hand made, 6.0cm

1 hobnail, 1.2cm

### Daub

2 non-fitting fragments, similar clean fabric, with little inclusions except occasional grog. No wattle marks. Both roughly 2cm thick. 102.8g

Bone

1 small burnt fragment 1.3g

Stone

2 frags PS, one with many scape marks on one surface. Poss roof tile, one re-used as work surface. 418.2g

### Trench 7/2

Fabric	No. sherds	Wt. sherds	Av sherd	Notes
GC1	4	27.3	6.8	includes beaded base frag
Total	4	27.3	6.83	

### Trench 8/1

Fabric	No. sherds	Wt. sherds	Av sherd	Notes
GC3	2	9.5	4.7	1 small rounded rim
GC4	11	115.0	10.5	1 very large upright rounded dog dish rim (79g: if excluded av sherd weight is 3.6g), 1 small jar rim
GC5	1	2.4		Glazed int and ext, prob small bowl or cup
Total	14	126.9	9.06	

Daub

5 tiny pieces of burnt clay, probably bonfire remains. 11.2g

Bone

21 small frags. 24.2g

### Trench 8/2

Fabric	No. sherds	Wt. sherds	Av sherd	Notes
GC1	7	29.3	4.2	Poss significant.
GC3	3	12.0	4.0	
GC4	26	150.5	5.8	1 rounded jar rim
Total	36	191.8	5.33	



## Metal

1 square shank, square head Fe nail. 5cm

1 small heavily corroded Fe nail, prob horseshoe nail. 3.1cm

## Daub

1 worn small fragment. 5.8g

## Bone

4 small frags. 13.7g

### **Trench 9/1**

Fabric	No. sherds	Wt. sherds	Av sherd	Notes
GC3	3	5.3	1.8	
GC4	8	25.3	3.2	Inc 1 'cup' rim
GC5	2	<0.1		
Total	13	30.6	2.35	

## Bone

3 fragments teeth, 2 tiny fragments of bone. 7.6g

### **Trench 10/1**

Fabric	No. sherds	Wt. sherds	Av sherd	Notes
GC3	2	13.3	6.6	
GC4	2	2.8	1.4	
Total	4	16.1	4.25	

## Bone

2 frags, one a tooth

## Slag

Rounded lump of Fe slag. 49.4g

### **Trench 11/2 ('Lower')**

Fabric	No. sherds	Wt. sherds	Av sherd	Notes
GC4	6	40.2	6.7	Inc 1 flared jar rim sherd
Total	6	40.2	6.7	

### Trench 13

Fabric	No. sherds	Wt. sherds	Av sherd	Notes
GC1	1	12.6		
GC3	4	17.1	4.3	Inc 1 jar rim sherd
GC4	30	127.3	4.2	Body sherds
GC7	1	3.6		Ribbed frag of tankard handle
GC9	2	8.5	4.3	One sherd is bung-hole or narrow neck frag.
Trap	1	3.4		Flat fragment much like other trap fragments, <i>poss SV</i>
Total	39	172.5	4.42	

### Bone

1 tiny frag. 1,4g

### Daub

1 heavily high temperature burnt frag, sintered. 3.6g

2 larger fragments, both slightly curved. 105.9g

### Trench 14

Fabric	No. sherds	Wt. sherds	Av sherd	Notes
GC3	2	12.4	6.2	One completely oxidised
GC4	4	21.1	5.27	
Total	6	33.5	5.58	

### Trench 15

Fabric	No. sherds	Wt. sherds	Av sherd	Notes
GC3	4	10.0	2.5	Inc. 1 small everted jar rim
GC4	21	116.9	5.6	Inc 2 base sherds and 1 everted rim sherd of jars

Total	25	126.9	5.08	
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#### Bone

1 frag long bone, 20.2g

#### Stone

1 frag PS. 126.6g

### **Trench 16**

#### Pottery

Fabric	No. sherds	Wt. sherds	Av sherd	Notes
GC1	1	2.9	2.9	Body sherd
GC3	12	29.1	2.4	
GC4	56	244.4	4.4	Includes 5 jar rim sherds, much larger than average sherds.
Trap	2	3.5	1.75	Smooth red-orange, with few inclusions. Poss SV ware, but too small to be certain.
Total	71	279.9	3.94	

#### Bone

6 tiny fragments, 9.7gm

### **Trench 17 LT upper**

#### Pottery

Fabric	No. sherds	Wt. sherds	Av sherd	Notes
GC1	1	18.5	18.5	Bead rim sherd
GC2	1	1.5	1.5	Body sherd, too small to judge form
GC3	12	45.7	3.81	2 small jar rim sherds
GC4	36	239.2	6.64	2 rim; 4 base, all seem to be small jars. 2 body sherds with lattice dec.
Total	50	304.9	6.1	

## Metal

1 small iron hobnail. 2.5cm; 4.9g

## Daub

Small fragment in soft pink fabric. 5.5g

## Bone

5 small fags, prob all limb bones. 13.4g

## Stone

4 fragments local CL, some with iron ore. Discarded.

## Glass

3 aqua fragments, neck of a Codd bottle. 40.8g

**Trench 17** (presumably 'lower': this would fit with some large sherds occurring)

Note: when re-examined, the label says TR 17.

## Pottery

Fabric	No. sherds	Wt. sherds	Av sherd	Notes
GC3	8	67.4	8.43	Most of weight is one large base sherd: take this out and av wt is 4.1g
GC4	38	251.8	6.63	Most weight is 2 large jar belly sherds. Take these out and av. wt is 4.0g. 2 very small jar bases
GC5	1	<0.1g		Surface spall
Total	47	319.2	6.79	

## Stone

1 frag. of micaceous PS, 6cm x 6cm x 1.5cm, one possible smoothed edge.

## Glass

Two tiny fragments of this 'forest' window glass. Undatable. 2.2g

## **Appendix 2**

### **Pottery fabric types**

GC1

Pale grey/pink, corky fabric, bead-rim smoothed. Black, poorly mixed fabric, occasional tiny calcite, and fairly frequent limestone <0.5mm. Occasional surface haematite <0.5mm. Late Iron Age fabric

GC2

Gaulish Samian

GC3

Dorset black-burnished ware

GC4

Congresbury ware (slightly gritty grey variety)

GC5

Miscellaneous modern white glazed wares

GC6

Miscellaneous post medieval glazed wares

GC7

Shepton Mallet

GC8

Clay tobacco pipe

GC9

Fine dark orange fabric with no visible inclusions. Dark brown matte slip.

## Appendix 3

### Pottery fabric and overall totals

#### GC1

Tr 7	2	3.5	1.8	Body sherds
Tr 7/2	4	27.3	6.8	includes beaded base frag
Tr 6/2	7	29.3	4.2	Poss significant.
Tr 13	1	12.6		
Tr 16	1	2.9	2.9	Body sherd
Tr 17	1	18.5	18.5	Bead rim sherd
Total	16	94.1	5.88	

#### GC2

Tr 17	1	1.5	1.5	Body sherd, too small to judge form
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#### GC3

Tr 1	5	38.6	7.7	3 flared jar rims, 1 flanged bowl rim
Tr 2	15	33.3	2.2	Inc 1 flared jar rim
Tr 3	4	8.8	2.2	
Tr 4	1	2.2		
Tr 6	3	9.9	3.3	Inc 1 fragment of flanged bowl
Tr 7	12	82.4	6.9	Includes 4 everted jar rim sherds, and 1 dog dish.
Tr 8/1	2	9.5	4.7	1 small rounded rim
Tr 8/2	3	12.0	4.0	
Tr 9/1	3	5.3	1.8	
Tr 10/1	2	13.3	6.6	
Tr 13	4	17.1	4.3	Inc 1 jar rim sherd
Tr 14	2	12.4	6.2	One completely oxidised
Tr 15	4	10.0	2.5	Inc. 1 small everted jar rim
Tr 16	12	29.1	2.4	
Tr 17	12	45.7	3.81	2 small jar rim sherds
Tr 17 'lower'	8	67.4	8.43	Most of weight is one large base



Total	92	397	4.32	sherd: take this out and av wt is 4.1g
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#### GC4

Tr 1	9	57.6	7.2	3 jar rims
Tr 2	56	191.4	3.4	Inc 1 small base and 1 rim of small jars
Tr 3	5	29.2	5.8	1 jar rim sherd
Tr 4	40	153.4	3.8	inc one small flared jar rim
Tr 5	4	4.5	1.1	
Tr 6	22	73.9	3.35	Inc 2 rims, one thickened
Tr 7	56	217.7	3.9	Inc. 5 rim sherds and 1 colander sherd
Tr 8/1	11	115.0	10.5	1 very large upright rounded dog dish rim (79g: if excluded av sherd weight is 3.6g), 1 small jar rim
Tr 8/2	26	150.5	5.8	1 rounded jar rim
Tr 9/1	8	25.3	3.2	Inc 1 'cup' rim
Tr 10/1	2	2.8	1.4	
Tr 11/2	6	40.2	6.7	Inc 1 flared jar rim sherd
Tr 13	30	127.3	4.2	Body sherds
Tr 14	4	21.1	5.27	
Tr 15	21	116.9	5.6	Inc 2 base sherds and 1 everted rim sherd of jars
Tr 16	56	244.4	4.4	Includes 5 jar rim sherds, much larger than average sherds.
Tr 17	36	239.2	6.64	2 rim; 4 base, all seem to be small jars. 2 body sherds with lattice dec.
Tr 17 'lower'	38	251.8	6.63	Most weight is 2 large jar belly sherds. Take these out and av. wt is 4.0g. 2 very small jar bases
Total	430	2062.2	4.80	

#### GC5

Tr 1	1	1.9	1.9	
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Tr 8/1	1	2.4		Glazed int and ext, prob small bowl or cup
Tr 9/1	2	<0.1		
Tr 17 'lower'	1	<0.1g		Surface spall
Total	5	4.4	0.08	

### GC 6

Tr 2	1	15.2		Rim of small bowl, internally glazed
Tr 6	3	8.4	2.8	2 rounded rims with traces of slip/glaze
Total	4	23.6	5.9	

### GC 7

Tr 2	1	1.8		Grits in place
Tr 13	1	3.6		Ribbed frag of tankard handle
Total	2	5.4	2.7	

### GC8

Tr 6	1	0.4		Clay pipe
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### GC9

Tr 13	2	8.5	4.3	One sherd is bung-hole or narrow neck frag.
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### Overall totals

				% by weight	% by number
GC1	16	94.1	5.88	3.62	2.91
GC2	1	1.5	1.5	0.04	0.18
GC3	92	397	4.32	5.31	16.76
GC4	430	2062.2	4.80	79.4	78.32
GC5	5	4.4	0.08	0.17	0.9
GC6	4	23.6	5.9	0.04	0.7

GC7	2	5.4	2.7	4.91	0.4
GC8	1	0.4	0.4	0.01	0.2
GC9	2	8.5	4.3	0.04	0.4
Total	549	2597.1	4.73		