Figure 21: TP11, south wall

Figure 22: TP13, east wall

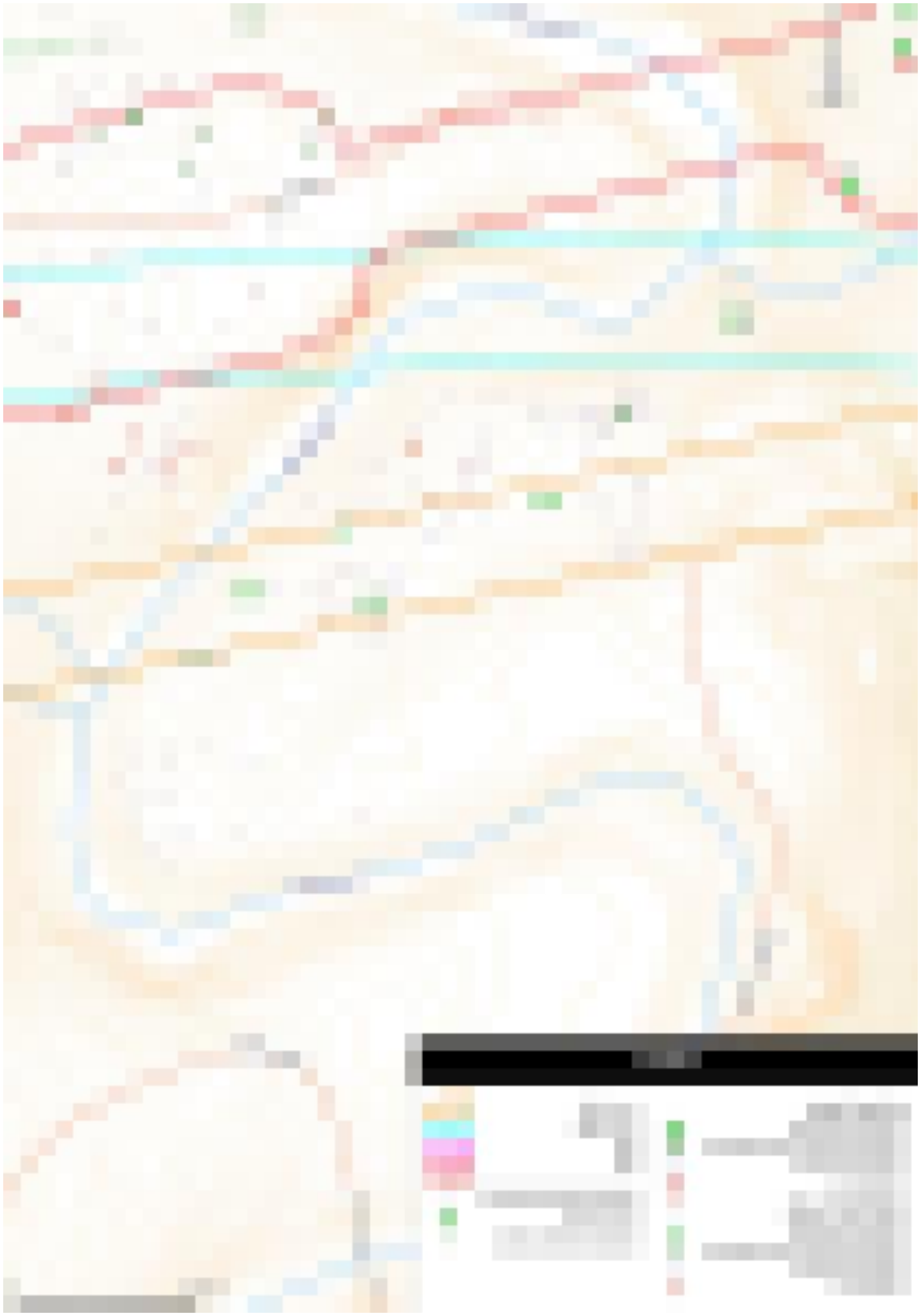

Figure 23: Test excavations east of Deep Creek (section 2C)

4.4 Section 2E – Deep Creek West

The terrace to the west/north side of the creek (section 2E) mirrors the terrace on the east/south, encircled on three sides by a meander of Deep Creek (Figure 24). However, the recent use and current condition of the land is very different. Widespread and major disturbance of the ground has already been discussed (Anderson 2012: 52). The effect of this disturbance on cultural deposits, and the status of surface artefacts (which are plentiful) and their relationship with possible subsurface deposits were the main objectives of excavations here (Figure 28). [redacted]

Two main soil types are present across the terrace. The southern half, which is more closely connected with the steep slope of the valley side, is made up of blackish brown, basaltic clay. The northern half is made up of reddish clayey silt containing frequent and diverse rocks. The centre of the terrace has undergone repeated disturbance including modern occupation since the mid-19th century, introduction of fill and grading. The presence and context of Aboriginal cultural material in these areas is also variable.

The [redacted] terrace was tested to investigate artefacts which had been exposed along a recently excavated track (THs 026-029 and 034-035), though no material was found below ground. The soil here probably derives from the clayey volcanic soils on the plateau above. This is also the case on the heavily eroded ground further north, [redacted] Excavation in this area (TP05) found very little topsoil and clay that is close to, or at the same level as ground level (Figure 25), with no artefacts below ground. [redacted]

Excavations [redacted] found shallow deposits of reddish brown silt containing numerous and diverse rocks. The depth and extent of cultural deposits, particularly the western and southern limits, were tested. One pit was excavated [redacted] (TP06), close to the transition into the basaltic clay that characterises the south terrace, valley side and escarpment. Silcrete, quartz and quartzite artefacts were found in amongst numerous rocks and pebbles, in reddish silty clay, with modern items also present (Figure 26). Another pit (TP07), [redacted] found more frequent rocks and modern items, at depths of up to 150mm (Figure 27). These excavations prove the presence of subsurface artefact deposits but show that the ground has undergone major disturbance through mechanical actions and probably frequent flooding.

The westernmost part of the study area consists of the plateau and escarpment northeast of Sunbury Road. Excavations here consisted of three lines of shovel probes (THs 038-049) which intersect with the crest of the escarpment and the flat ground of the plateau behind (Figure 29). The soil is coarse, dark, basaltic clay, and no artefacts were found in any excavation pits, [redacted]. These results show that cultural deposits are sparse on this escarpment, similar to that on the other side of the valley, where clay is also present at the surface.

Figure 24: Terrace on the west side of Deep Creek (section 2E)

Figure 25: TP05, showing clay at ground surface level

Figure 26: TP06, east wall

Figure 27: TP07, south wall

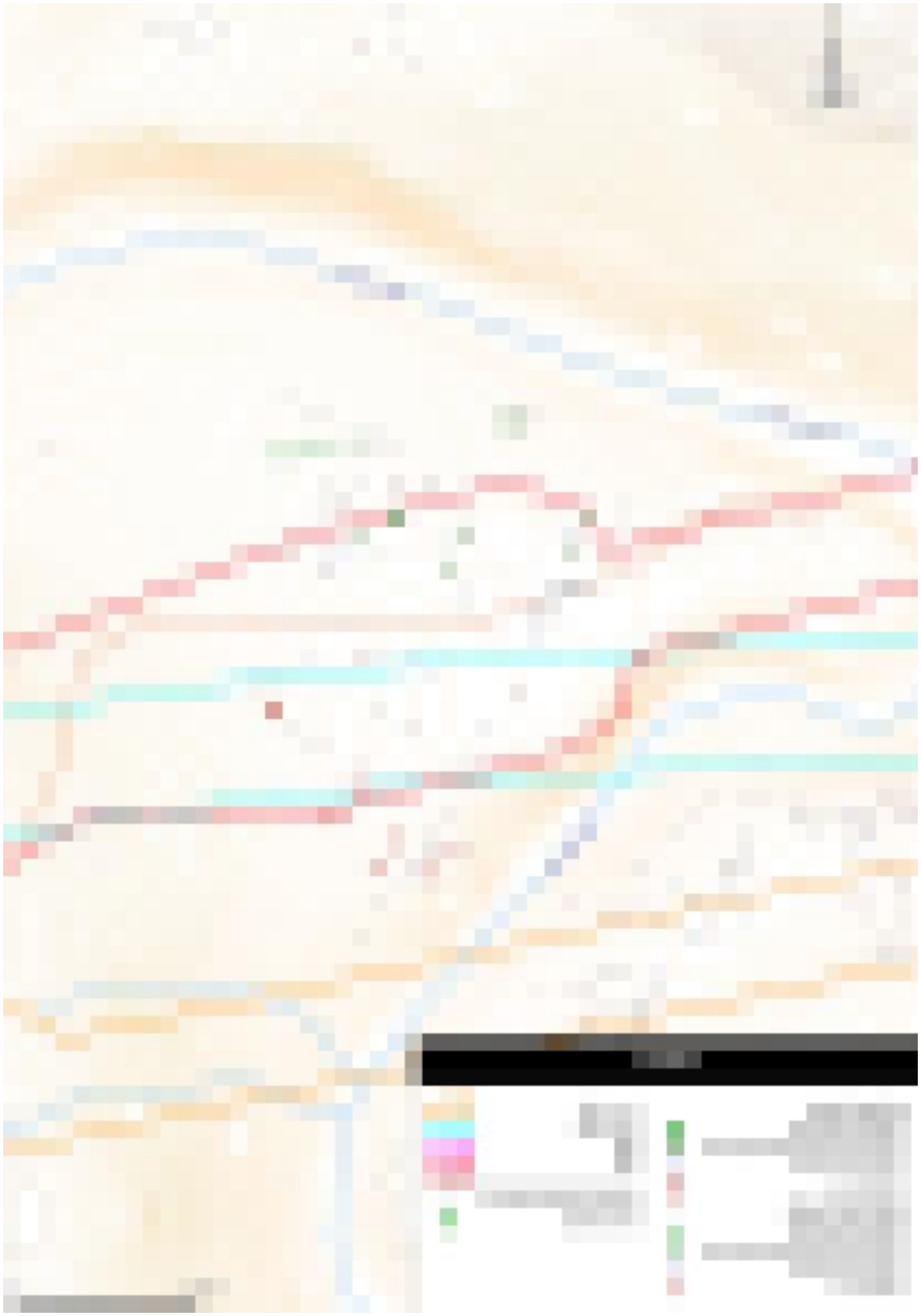

Figure 28: Test excavations west of Deep Creek (section 2E)

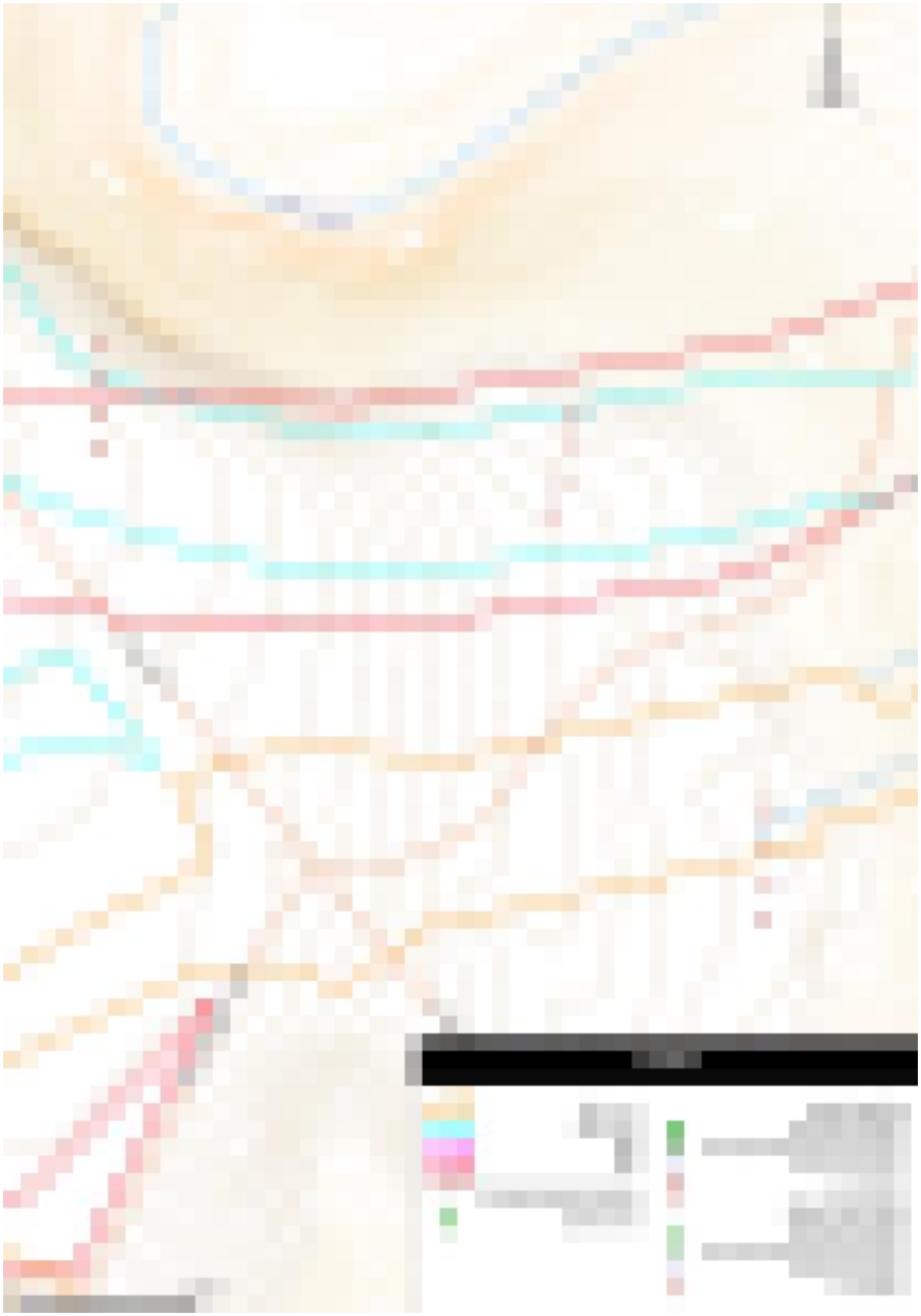

Figure 29: Test excavations on escarpment beside Sunbury Road (section 2E)

5 Finds

Almost 650 lithic artefacts were recorded on the surface during seven days of ground survey in 2011. None of these were collected, and so analysis was based on information recorded in the field, including artefacts' basic attributes - material, dimensions and form (where it was possible to distinguish). Conclusions drawn about the material culture include the variable proportions of stone tool forms and the apparent diversity of materials (Anderson 2012: 68-70). Excavated artefacts collected during the present phase of fieldwork have been processed, though they have not yet been fully analysed and catalogued. Therefore, at this stage any remarks about these artefacts are preliminary. Nevertheless, it is already apparent that the nature of the material, which appears to be diverse in terms of forms and materials, will have a bearing on the assessment of the significance of sites.

Artefacts collected during excavations at Lochton 7 (VAHR 7822-3274) have been analysed and catalogued. These items, from probably the most secure contexts encountered in the study area, display a diversity of forms and materials which appears to be replicated in the surface (and subsurface) material on the creek terraces to the west. The 63 collected artefacts (from two THs and one TP) consist of flaked and ground basalt (n=13), quartz (n=28), quartzite (n=5), silcrete (n=14), tachylyte (n=1) and one small piece of worn ochre. A notable assemblage is from TH024, in which ten silcrete items were found, among them three bladelets, one retouched flake and a backed blade, a high rate of re-worked tools (Figure 30).

[redacted] These include some notable forms, such as flaked silcrete and quartzite pebbles, blades and a basalt hand axe blank (Anderson 2012: 131). Initial assessment of the material collected during excavations indicates that the diversity of forms and materials is replicated below ground, for example in TP08 (Figure 31). There are several types of silcrete and quartzite present, examples of flaked basalt, perhaps debris from preparation of implements such as axes, and some very finely worked small tools which display signs of re-touch and usage.

[redacted] there are also diverse stone tools present, especially in TP06 (Figure 32 and 33), though these appear to be slightly less numerous than on the east bank, their context is less secure and there are more historical-period artefacts. Though both sides of the creek have been inundated by flood waters, the west bank has been particularly damaged because of modern land usage in recent and very recent times. Among the artefacts from this area are small silcrete pebbles which have been knapped to produce very small flakes (Figure 34). One artefact found on the surface may be of high significance – a heavily knapped bottle base whose maker's mark allows it to be dated 1922-1929 (Figure 35**;** Thornton 2008).

Full analysis of the collected artefacts will provide more information on the nature and significance of excavated deposits, which is especially important for evaluating areas where there are damaged or insecure contexts.

Figure 30: Silcrete artefacts from TH024 (Lochton 7), 100mm depth

Figure 31: Diverse materials from TP08, 100-150mm

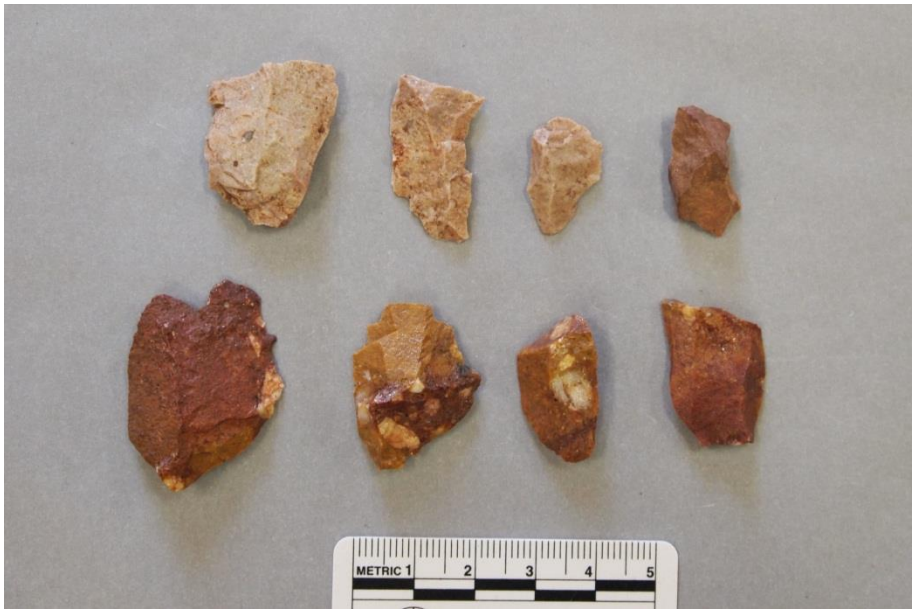

Figure 32: TP06, 100-150mm, quartzite and silcrete artefacts

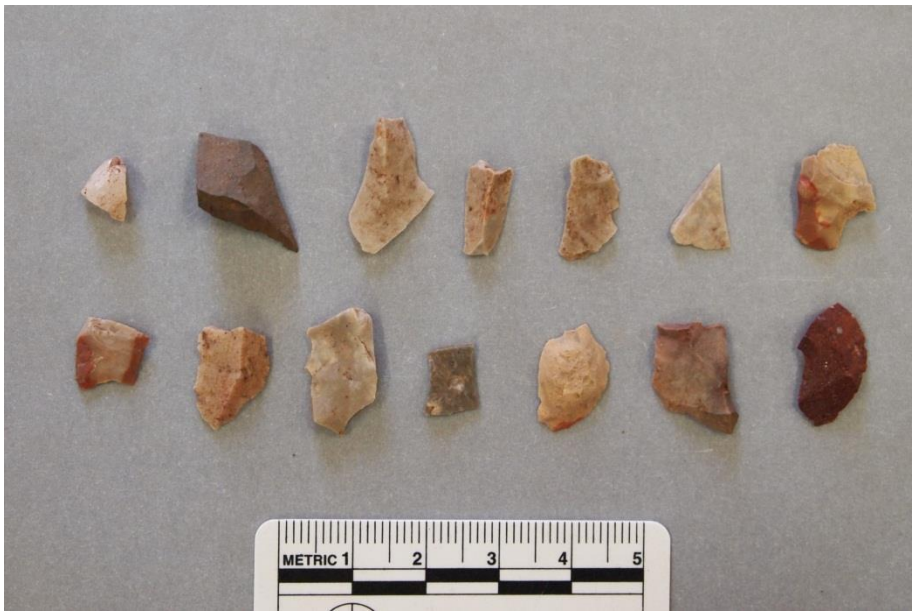

Figure 33: TP06, 100-150mm, silcrete, quartz and tachylyte artefacts

Figure 34: TH030, 0-100mm

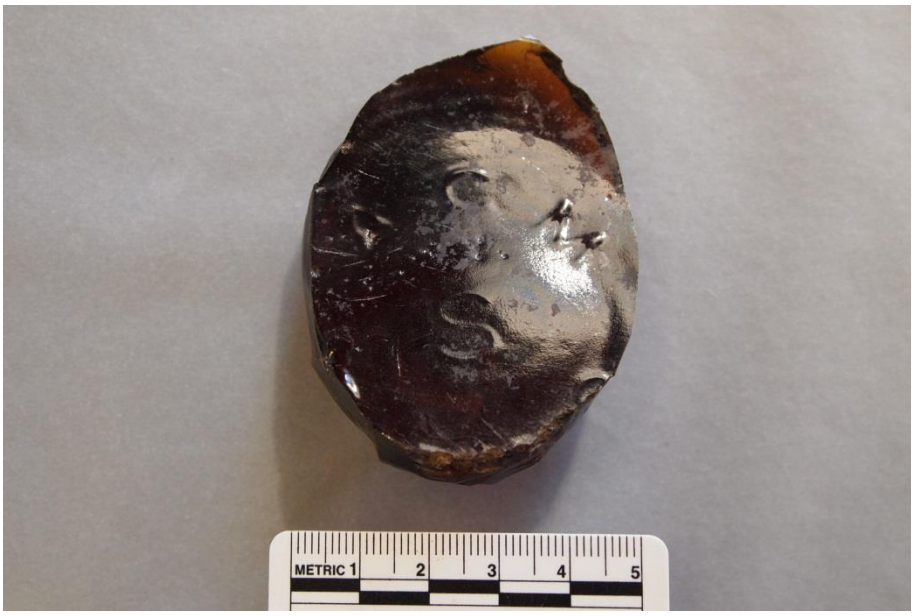

Figure 35: Knapped bottle base, dating from the 1920s

6 Chronology

Samples of charcoal were collected from a number of excavation pits, though only two from where the context is considered to be secure. These will be sent for radiocarbon dating, which will provide information on the age of cultural deposits at this site. The only other definite indicator of chronology is the knapped bottle base dating from the 1920s.

7 Outcomes

The test excavations allow for a more informed assessment of the nature and significance of cultural deposits in the Deep Creek district of the activity area for CHMP 11935. Before an assessment can be made of the impact of each alignment on archaeological deposits, the field data will need to be fully processed, analysed, and re-interpretations made of the sites recorded during the ground survey. The following outcomes result from this new fieldwork:

- The size and nature of Lochton 7 (VAHR 7822-3274) has been re-assessed, and information provided to the VAHR.

- A surface artefact was recorded southwest of Lochton 7 which will be registered with the VAHR

- Subsurface and surface artefact deposits were recorded south of Lochton 7, where further investigation is required to clarify the size of the site before this is registered with the VAHR

- New information was gathered on the nature of the extensive artefact deposits [redacted] (Bulla 1 and 2: VAHR 7822-3278 and -3279)

- New information was gathered on the nature of artefact deposits [redacted] north/west of Deep Creek, which will result in re-interpretation of the sites previously recorded there – condensing the six previously recorded sites into two sites

- Two separate surface artefacts were recorded [redacted] west of Deep Creek which will be registered with the VAHR

8 References

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