

CPAT Report No. 1391

Walton Basin 2015-16:

Outreach Activities

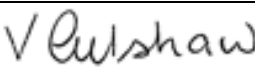




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Cover - Volunteers walking in transects at Knapp Farm. Photo CPAT- 4152-008.



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CONTENTS

SUMMARY	III
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 PRESTEIGNE FESTIVAL 2015	1
4 FIELDWALKING	3
5 LADY HAWKINS SCHOOL, KINGTON	9
7 CONCLUSIONS	11
8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	12
9 SOURCES	12

Summary

Recent Cadw-funded project work in the Walton Basin has highlighted further the importance and complexity of this area of eastern Radnorshire, which is virtually unparalleled elsewhere within the British Isles. The area encapsulates the archaeology of the Welsh borderland and is so far known to contain evidence for multiperiod activity from the early post-glacial period onwards. One of the primary aims of the Walton Basin project has been to raise the profile of archaeology with the local community and it is hoped that through improved awareness and a better appreciation of the past that this important group of monuments can be managed in a more appropriate manner to secure their future preservation.

Community involvement and other education and outreach activities have been an important part of the project since its inception, and this has continued in the final phase of the project during 2015-16.

The programme of activities developed in 2015-2016 was designed to provide field training for local volunteers and unique education opportunities for local schools, by learning about archaeology and its practice, as well as a third consecutive year as part of the Presteigne Festival. Activities included fieldwalking surveys, finds location and mapping, as well as class-based workshops to help students understand the archaeological significance of the area. In collaboration with Sean Harris from Wilde Boar Press, new multi-disciplinary approaches were explored to explain and interpret the historic landscape of the Walton Basin.

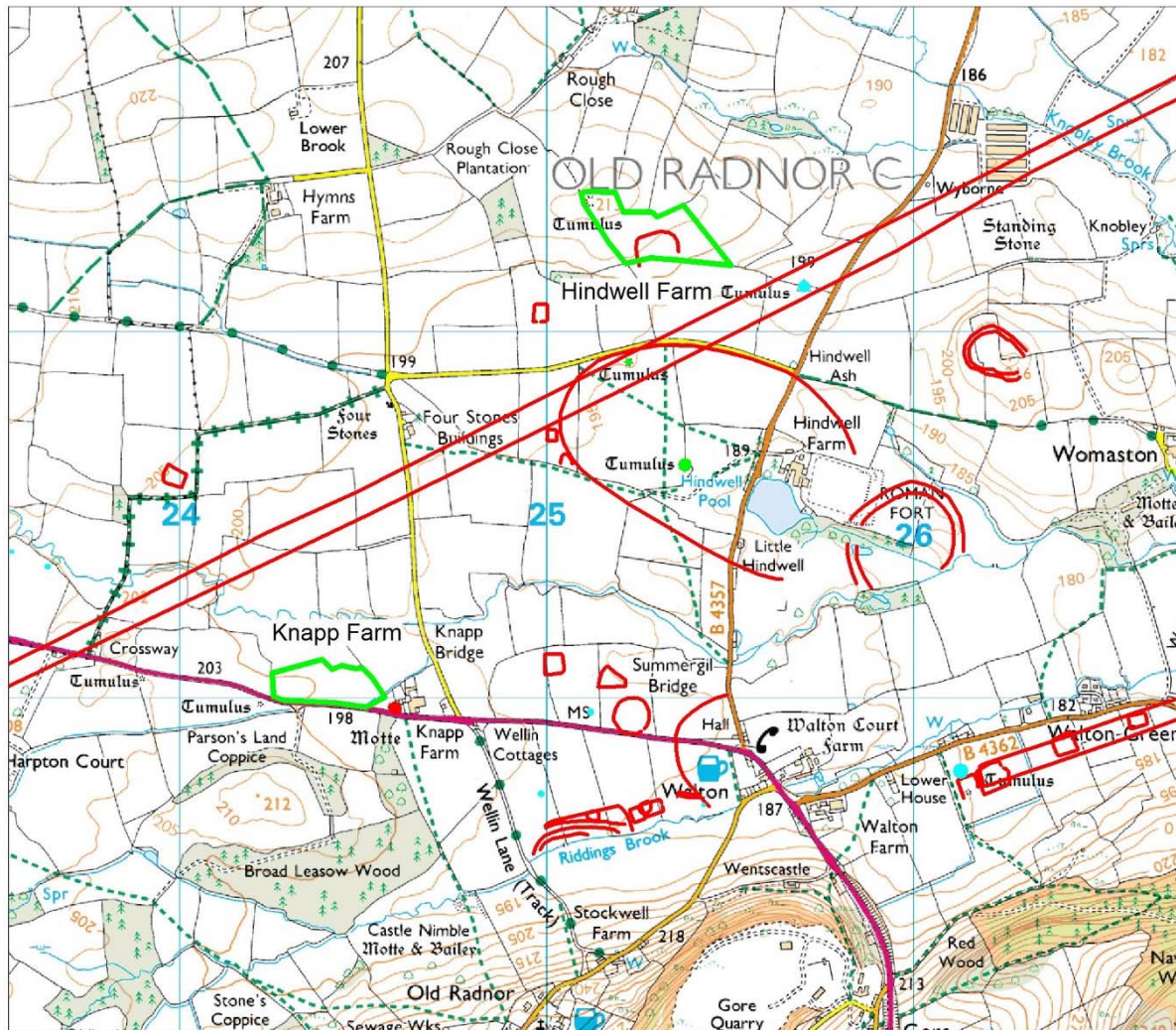
1 Introduction

- 1.1. The area of the Walton Basin encapsulates the broader archaeology of the Welsh borderland and is known to contain evidence for multiperiod activity from the early post-glacial period onwards. The Walton Basin has been extensively researched and investigated by CPAT for nearly 20 years. The Cadw-funded study of the multiperiod complex of monuments in Radnorshire's Walton Basin was initiated in 2012-13 and followed on from pan-Wales projects studying prehistoric funerary and ritual monuments and Roman civil settlements, or *vici*. To date the results have been presented to and shared with the public through several means: reports, a booklet (Britnell, 2013), virtual reality reconstructions, attendance at the Presteigne Festival and Kington Show, public talks and guided visits. Local volunteers have also been involved in much of the fieldwork conducted in the past years.
- 1.2. Community involvement and other education and outreach activities have been an important part of the project since the outset, and this has continued in the final phase of the project during 2015-16.
- 1.3. In the past few years Cadw (The historic environment service of the Welsh Government) has funded research projects and public engagement events which enabled people to better understand the beautiful local landscape. In 2015 CPAT Outreach and Education Department developed a series of activities which aimed to engage with and involve a wider audience, in particular local volunteers, young people, students from local schools and their teachers. Traditional field techniques and innovative artistic approaches were used to investigate and enhance people's understanding of the local historic landscape.
- 1.4. The involvement of communities and groups with the local heritage has proved to be of critical importance in promoting both a sense of belonging and a wider awareness and responsibility for the local archaeology. The project has further strengthened links with local communities, providing an opportunity for volunteers, both adults and children, to participate and gain a greater understanding of archaeological techniques and the range of monuments in the Walton Basin.
- 1.5. The outreach programme 2015-2016 included a series of public events, such as illustrated talks and guided visits during the well-known Presteigne Festival, as well as field surveys and educational workshops which form the following sections.

2 Presteigne Festival 2015

- 2.1. For the third consecutive year Nigel Jones was invited to participate in the Presteigne Festival. This, the 33rd music and arts festival, took place in August 2015 and provided a very different forum for disseminating the results from the Walton Basin project to a wider audience drawn from across Britain, but also including a number of local residents. The previous appearances had focused on the prehistory of the area, although this time the event drew on the basin's medieval history and archaeology.
- 2.2. The format followed that of previous years, with a 45-minute presentation in Evenjobb Village Hall, followed by a guided coach tour around the basin, visiting

Old Radnor, New Radnor and Kinnerton, as well as drawing attention to other salient locations en route.



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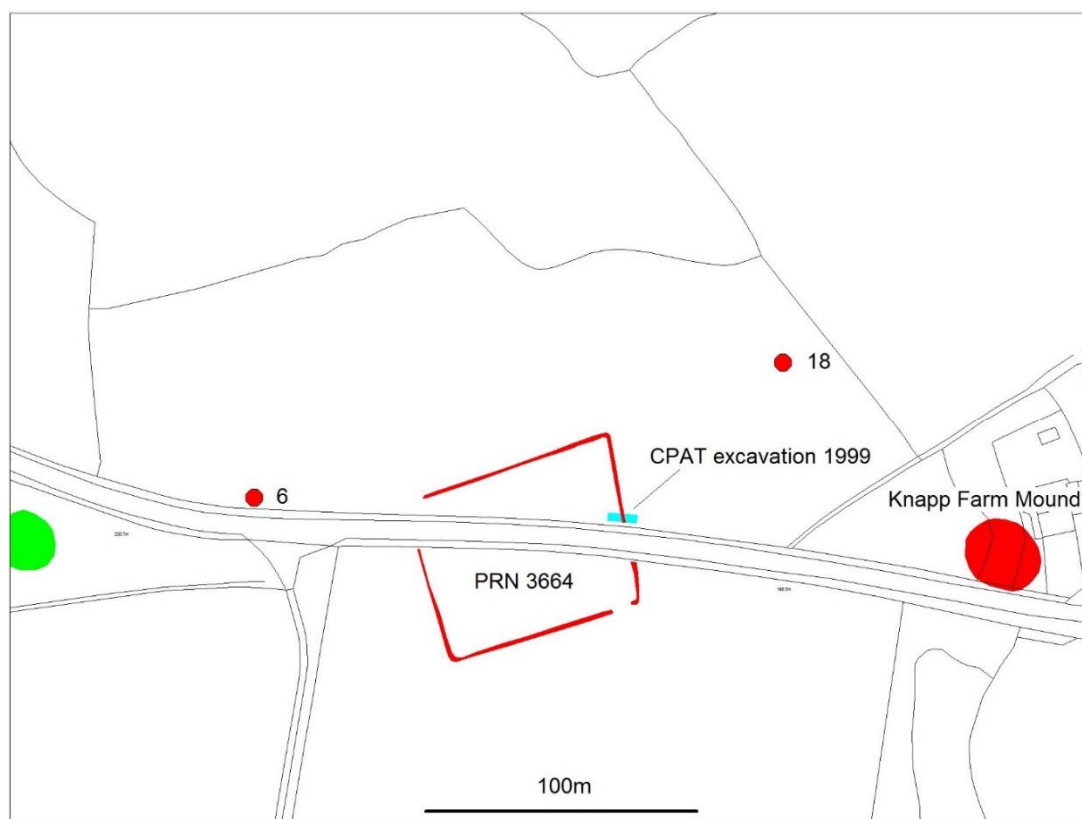
Fig. 1 The location of the fieldwalking (in green) at Hindwell Farm and Knapp Farm in relation to known prehistoric monuments

4 Fieldwalking

- 4.1. In October 2015 two days of fieldwalking were organised with local volunteers, one at Knapp Farm and the other at Upper Ninepence. Finds were located by the use of handheld GPS equipment. Modern and post-medieval material was not collected. Both fields chosen for the exercise contained known archaeological sites and both were considered suitable areas where artefact scatters might be revealed.
- 4.2. Material was collected and placed in individual bags marked with the project name, a unique identifying number and its location, as determined by handheld GPS equipment. The material was subsequently cleaned prior to identification and reporting by Philippa Bradley (see below).

Knapp Farm

- 4.3. The field at Knapp Farm was centred at SO 243 599, with the survey covering around 2.6 ha. A rectilinear enclosure (PRN 3664) of likely Iron Age date is located in the southern part of the field, extending beyond the A44, and was investigated by CPAT in 1995, although no dateable finds were recovered (Gibson 1999, 25-6). The field also lies immediately to the west of Knapp Mound, a possible medieval motte, or Neolithic mound. (Fig. 2)



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Fig. 2 The location of flints recovered from the field at Knapp Farm

- 4.4. A cereal crop had been removed from the field recently and the ground was relatively dry so that the soil conditions were less favourable than would have been the case had if the ground had been exposed to rain and weathering. The methods adopted comprised walking regular transects, using the rows of stubble to give a consistent pattern. Each strip was walked from north/east to south/west allowing each person to cover an area of about 2m (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3 Volunteers walking regular transects at Knapp Farm in 2015. Photo CPAT 4152-002.

Upper Ninepence

- 4.5. The field in question was centred at SO 252 612, with the survey covering around 4.3 ha. Around 700 flints have previously been recovered from the area, largely comprising small flakes or knapping waste (Dunn 1966). The surveyed area contains several known prehistoric monuments, including a Neolithic enclosure (PRN 50187), and two Bronze Age barrows (PRN 305 and 50188), one only known from cropmark evidence (Fig. 6).
- 4.6. The Upper Ninepence Enclosure was discovered from the air by Professor St Joseph in 1969 and investigated in CPAT in 1994, revealing the ditch to be 2m across and 0.7m deep. A radiocarbon date of 1880-1520 cal. BC was produced from charcoal within the lower ditch silts and another of CAL. 200 BC to AD 130 from the upper silts (Gibson 1999, 19-20).
- 4.7. The upstanding barrow at Upper Ninepence, which at one time measured 30m by 1m (Dunn 1974), was excavated by CPAT in 1994, revealing a range of pre-barrow features including three circular structures, suggesting two main phases of activity.

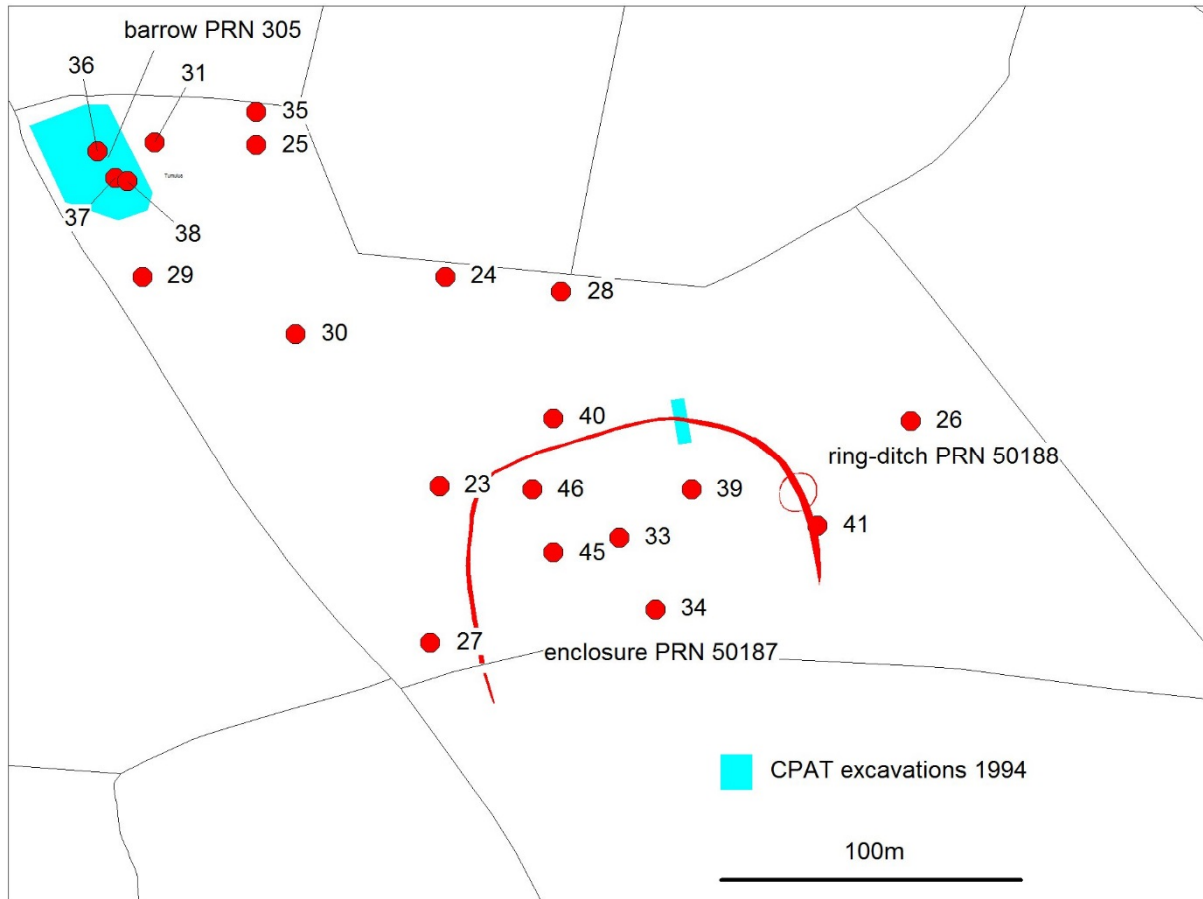
The first, associated with Peterborough Ware was dated to c. 3000 cal. BC, and the second, associated with Grooved Ware, to around 2700 cal. BC (Gibson 1999, 29-47).

- 4.8. The field forms part of Hindwell Farm and, in common with most of this landholding is mostly cultivated using direct drilling as part of a 12-year rotation and consequently the field had not been ploughed, although it had been recently planted. On the day of the survey, the weather was relatively favourable, with generally overcast condition and good visibility.



Figs 4 and 5 Volunteers and children from Radnor Valley working together at Hindwell Farm. Photo CPAT 4152-004 and 005.

- 4.9. The survey was undertaken with children from Radnor Valley Primary School along with local volunteers, who received an introduction to the archaeology of the Walton Basin and an induction on field walking technique and surveying tools. A traditional transect-walking method was combined with walking within grids to illustrate the different surveying techniques. (Figs 3 and 4)



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Fig. 6 The distribution of flints recovered from the field at Upper Ninepence

- 4.10. The specialist report forms the following section and it identified a small assemblage of worked flints, predominantly dominated by debitage. The distribution of the identified flints of Neolithic or Bronze Age date at Hindwell Farm shows that the majority were concentrated around the excavated Bronze Age barrow and the Neolithic enclosure (Fig. 6).

Worked flint by Philippa Bradley

Introduction

- 4.11. A small assemblage of worked flint (21 pieces) and a piece grey chert was recovered from fieldwalking at Walton. The assemblage is summarised in Table 1, and is dominated by debitage. There are no particularly diagnostic pieces, but a broad Neolithic–Bronze Age date is probable on technological grounds. The flint is fairly good quality, and ranges in colour from dark brown to light grey. A few pieces have a smooth buff or cream cortex; one piece has an orange stained cortex. This raw material is probably derived from glacial drift deposits, perhaps from deposits in the northern Cotswolds or around Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan (eg, Charlesworth 1957, 77; Tyler 1976, 4). Better quality flint may have come from Berkshire Downs or Chilterns. Some plough damage was noted, although this was not extensive; four pieces have been burnt.

Assemblage composition

- 4.12. The assemblage is almost entirely debitage with only a single piece of miscellaneous retouch recovered (Table 1). Many of the flakes are relatively small and not particularly chronologically distinctive. Both soft and hard hammers have been used. Flakes ranged from almost entirely cortical to non-cortical pieces indicating that reduction was being undertaken, although no cores were recovered. A single irregularly worked piece and a small chip were also found.
- 4.13. The single retouched form, which may be unfinished, is a bifacially worked piece with slightly invasive retouch around much of its circumference. There is a slight point although this does not seem to have been retouched robustly enough to have been used as a piercer. It may therefore have been unfinished, perhaps originally intended to be a scraper or piercer. Although there are no diagnostic pieces, a broad Neolithic or Bronze Age date is likely for this small group.
- 4.14. The assemblage is entirely consistent with larger assemblages recovered from fieldwalking in the area (see for example, Bradley 1999; Gibson 1999; Bradley 2014).

Table 1: assemblage composition

Type	Number
Chip	1
Flake	19
Irregular waste	1
Miscellaneous retouch	1
Total	22

Table 2: Worked flint catalogue

NGR	Find No.	Flint type	No.	Comments
<i>Knapp Farm</i>				
2430959995	006	Flake	1	Grey chert
2450460045	018	Flake	1	Heavily plough damaged
<i>Upper Ninepence</i>				
2523361252	023	Flake	1	Broken and lightly burnt check
2523661330	024	Miscellaneous retouch	1	flake with bifacial, slightly invasive retouch, possible scraper or unfinished piercer, probably Neolithic or Bronze Age
2517261366	025	Flake	1	Heavily burnt
2539061274	026	Irregular waste	1	Small fragment, irregular waste, some plough damage
2523061200	027	Natural	1	Natural, discarded
2527461327	028	Flake	1	Some plough damage, stained pebble cortex
2513461322	029	Flake	1	Grey flint
2518561303	030	Flake	1	Broken flake, good quality brown flint
2513861367	031	Flake	1	Small, squat flake, thin buff cortex
2529361235	033	Flake	1	Thin buff cortex, medium brown flint
2530561211	034	Flake	1	Broken, good quality dark brown flint, some possible edge damage from use rather than plough damage
2517261377	035	Flake	1	Broken and burnt, small irregular flake
2511961364	036	Flake	1	Dark brown flint, good quality
2512561355	037	Flake	1	Small flake, brown flint with grey cherty inclusions

2512961354	038	Flake	2	Small flakes, 1 very heavily burnt, 1 mid-brown flint with cherty inclusions
2531761251	039	Flake	1	Small, broken flake - dark good quality flint
2527161275	040	Flake	1	Broken, buff/cream cortex, plough damaged
2535961239	041	Flake	1	Broken, buff/cream cortex
2527161230	045	Flake	1	Thin buff cortex, medium brown flint
2526461251	046	Chip	1	Small chip, grey cortex

5 Lady Hawkins School, Kington

- 5.1. In November 2015 CPAT collaborated with Sean Harris, Wild Boar Press, to deliver an experimental workshop at Lady Hawkins High School, Kington. The event included an overview of the archaeology of the Walton Basin and information about the management of historic landscape.
- 5.2. This was followed by a workshop which used animation principals to provide a tangible link with the past. The aim of the workshop was to assess existing archaeological and historical information and develop innovative means of interpretation that demonstrate how our ancestors lived, how they shaped the land and the ways in which the present landscape reflects past activities. Using archaeological information and material evidence, as well as local folklore, students developed their own storyboard and conceptualised its animation. The activity aimed to explore the student's connection with the past, through objects, landscapes and most importantly, living culture. This proved to be a powerful exercise to foster a better understanding of past, present, and future living experiences.
- 5.3. The feedback received by the school was overwhelming: 'an exciting day on films and the prehistoric environment for my sixth form students- excellent! The students really enjoyed the entire experience' (Nicholas Dinsdale, Head of History, Lady Hawkins School).
- 5.4. The school team is now considering seeking external funding to create the animation with the support of professional artists and archaeologists. In addition, the author and Sean Harris will present a joint paper at the next Chartered Institute for Archaeologists conference on the role of archaeology in public education which will take place in April 2016.



Fig. 7 Workshop at Lady Hawkins School with Sixth Form students and Sean Harris, Wilde Boar Press. Photo CPAT 4099-002.

7 Conclusions

- 7.1. The Walton Basin project has from its inception aimed to raise the profile of archaeology in general, and the range and importance of the prehistoric monument complex in particular, with the local community. As part of the outreach programme during each phase of the project opportunities have been provided for local volunteers to participate in a range of activities, including excavation, survey and fieldwalking, while attendance at local events and engagement with schools has also played a key role. It is hoped that through improved awareness and a better appreciation of the past that this important group of monuments can be managed in a more appropriate manner to secure their future preservation.
- 7.2. During the final season of work a total of 55 people participated in activities including fieldwalking, educational workshops, site visits and talks, as summarised below:

Table 3: Summary of outreach activities and participation in 2015-16

Activity	No. people
Presteigne Festival	65
Fieldwalking volunteers	13
Radnor Valley Primary school - students	21
Radnor Valley Primary School - staff	4
Lady Hawkins High School - sixth form students	12
Lady Hawkins High School - staff	5

- 7.3. The activities have allowed participants to gain a better understanding of how past and present human activities have affected this rural landscape. The archaeological investigations, both in the field and in the classroom have stimulated new debates about the management and preservation of the local historic landscape.
- 7.4. The archaeology of the Walton Basin has few upstanding monuments, but despite this has the ability to impress with the sheer scale of some of the prehistoric enclosures, which are amongst the largest in Britain. Nevertheless, the lack of a visible component has presented challenges when addressing audiences and it is mark of the project's success that many residents now have a good appreciation of the buried past and important issues such as long-term land-use and agricultural sustainability can influence the preservation of archaeology.
- 7.5. The constant support by local communities and the consistent attendance at public archaeological and heritage events has once again confirmed the close relationship between people and the historic environment of the Walton Basin.

8 Acknowledgements

- 8.1. The writer would particularly like to thank Mr A Price and Mr J Goodwin, for permission to access their fields and carry out the work. Thanks are also due to: the volunteers, Ian Cole, Angela Davies, Celia Jones, Barbara Joss, Tanya Price and Jane Walmsley; the pupils and staff of Radnor Valley Primary School for their help with the fieldwalking; Sean Harris from Wilde Boar Press; and to A-level students and staff of Lady Hawkins High School, Kington, in particular Nicholas Dinsdale, Head of History.
- 8.2. The writer would also like to thank Nigel Jones, principal archaeologist, for guidance on the planning of the field survey and during the preparation of the report.

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