

EOXP TEST PIT 42

Location of Test pit: 25 Pitts Road, Headington Quarry, Oxford

Householder: Paul and Viv Miles

Date of Excavation: 22/23 May 2012

Area excavated: 1m x 1m

Weather conditions: Very hot and dry 28 - 30c.

Excavators: Steve Nicholson, Chris and Cid (the dog) Turley, Mandy Bellamy.

Report by: Steve Nicholson and team.

GPS location and height above sea-level: SP 5590 0733, 115m OD

Introduction

The test pit was dug in the back garden vegetable growing area approx. 30 metres from the house. The house is located in an area previously known for quarrying, although Pitts Road is named after a former Prime Minister. There is a mix of old stone built housing and modern in the Headington Quarry area, and 25 Pitts Road was built in the mid 1930's. The back garden and neighbouring gardens contain a lot of old apple trees suggesting an orchard was here before the house was built.

Excavation summary

The test pit reached a maximum depth of 0.57m within a sondage 0.5m x 1m to the south, where the natural degraded limestone layer was reached. The soil was very silty, dry, dark and organic and very easy to sieve, probably due to it being in a vegetable patch. At approx. 0.25m the top of a stone feature appeared which looked like the end of a dry stone wall. The top three stones were removed; some with burn marks, and the feature was shown to extend down to approx. 0.45m, leaving two stones still in place embedded in the East facing section. The natural was reached across the entire sondage including under the feature. All soil was sieved.

Results

Spit (101): there was no turf to remove and the very disturbed manured soil was very dry and loose so spades and shovels were used down to 0.20m

Spit / Context	Type of deposit	Description	Soil sample	comments
Spit (101)	layer	Top surface, bottom 0.20m. Garden soil layer. 1m x 1m. Compaction: very loose, very dry. Colour: dark brown. Composition: 90% silt, 10% sand. Inclusions: stones, shell, charcoal, flint, all <1%, all angular. Few round pebbles. Finds: CBM, glass, pot, ceramic frags, slate, nails, bone, small amounts. Boundaries: none=spit. Contamination roots, worms. Above surface, below (102). Spade/shovel/sieve dug. Garden soil: very disturbed.		

Spit (102): The soil was still very disturbed, very dry and loose at 0.20m down to 0.28m when it became slightly more yellowish. Spit (101,102) from the surface down to 0.28m was the same.

Hand shovel dug as soil very loose.

Spit / Context	Type of deposit	Description	Soil sample	comments
Spit (102)	layer	Top 0.20m, bottom 0.28m. Garden soil layer. 1m x 1m. Compaction: very loose, very dry. Colour: dark brown. Composition: 90% silt, 10% sand. Inclusions: charcoal, angular flint and stones. Finds: CBM, pot, glass, ceramic, flint frags, gold coloured pen nib put into own bag. Boundaries: above none, below sandier some gravel. Contamination roots, worms. Above (101), below (103). Trowel dug. Garden soil.		

Context (103): disturbed sandy garden soil. Top of stone feature appeared in South West of pit. Trowel and hand shovel dug.

Spit / Context	Type of deposit	Description	Soil sample	comments
Context (103)	layer	Top 0.28m, bottom 0.32m. Garden sandy soil layer. 1m x 1m. Compaction: very dry. Colour: dark brown yellowish. Composition: silt 80%, sand gravel 10% . Inclusions: angular stones and flint, charcoal, some rounded pebbles. Finds: CBM, pot/ceramic frags, large amount charcoal 2%, flint. A piece of bright blue glass? A bone and glazed pot frag put in bag. Boundaries: above dark brown (102), below large stones (104) SW corner. Contamination roots, worms. Above (102), below (104). Trowel dug. Garden soil mixed with sand gravel and top of two large stones set on edge feature(104). Decided to do sondage (104)		

Context (104): Sondage in South, 0.5m x 1m. Hand shovel and trowel used.

Spit / Context	Type of deposit	Description	Soil sample	comments
Context (104)	layer	Top 0.32m, bottom 0.45m. Sandy gravel layer. 0.5m x 1m. Compaction: damp. Colour: yellow. Composition: sandy gravel 90%, silt <10%. Inclusions: clay lenses, flint. Finds: CBM, lots of charcoal, glass, bone, ceramic, flint frags, clay pipe, snail shell, FE objects. Boundaries: above dark brown yellowish, below yellow gravel. Contamination roots, worms. Above (103), below (105). Trowel, shovel and sieve dug. At least five large stones, with signs of burning on top two.		

Context (105) Continued with sondage, new context created as large stones may be remains of a dry stone wall running East-West. Very sandy gravelly soil with lots of angular limestone fragments. Dug with trowel and hand shovel

Spit / Context	Type of deposit	Description	Soil sample	comments
Context (105)	layer	Top 0.45m, bottom 0.53m. Disturbed gravel/sand and limestone layer. 0.5m x 1m. Compaction: damp. Colour: yellow greyish. Composition: sand gravel 90%, degraded limestone 10%. Inclusions: small clay lenses, gravel stones, some charcoal. Finds: charcoal, pot frags, white ceramic, brown pot frag glazed on sides, nail, possible mortar (or degraded limestone?) small amount flint, glass. Boundaries: above (104) diffuse, below (106) more sandy clay or degraded limestone. Contamination roots, worms. Above (104) below (106). Trowel dug. May be reaching natural. Got right under the 'wall' feature leaving two large stones embedded in East facing section. Found couple of pot frags under feature.		

Context (106): dug down to natural, degraded limestone can appear a bit more 'clayey'; lots of angular stones; find on top of natural, i.e. clay pipe fragment. Spade and mattock used to break surface: all sieved

Spit / Context	Type of deposit	Description	Soil sample	comments
Context (106)	layer	Top 0.53m, bottom 0.57m. Sandy degraded clayey limestone layer. 0.5m x 1m. Compaction: damp. Colour: yellow greyish. Composition: clay/limestone 50%, sand/gravel 50%. Inclusions: lots of limestones 10mm to 100mm, one piece of charcoal 8mm, one piece small flint, several black stones. . Finds: clay pipe. Boundaries: above sandy gravel, below natural degraded limestone. Contamination worms. Above (105), below natural. Trowel dug.		





Context 102



Context 103





Context 104 looking NE



Context 106 looking E

