### **EOXP TEST PIT 53**

Address: 23 Church Cowley Road Date of Excavation: 25/09/12 Area excavated: e.g. 1 x 1m

Weather conditions: Dry overcast with occasional sunny spells. Previous day there had been

very heavy rain

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Report by: Nathalie Garfunkle

GPS location and height above sea-level: SP 5345 0410, 67.5m OD

### Introduction

A test pit was dug in the rear garden of 23 Church Cowley Road prior to the unveiling of a blue plaque commemorating it as the childhood home of comedian Ronnie Corbett. The aim was to ascertain what activities had taken place in the area prior to the construction of housing along Church Cowley Road in 1934. The test pit was dug at the bottom of the rear garden in an area which had been previously either a flower bed or vegetable patch and was now covered with longish grass.

## **Excavation summary**

The test pit was dug to an approximate depth of 0.39m. A sondage was dug to a depth of 0.02m in the SW corner to confirm that the natural had been reached. All material excavated from the test pit was sieved to aid retrieval of finds. The first two contexts below the turf (101 & 102) were dug as spits.

The removal of the turf (100) revealed dark blackish brown clayey silt which was spread across the entire surface of the test pit. The turf contained several fragments of pot and bone, 2 shards of glass and iron nails.

(101) was dug as a spit: it contained extensive evidence of burning including charcoal (10%), burnt nails (40+) and other burnt objects. A copper alloy belt buckle, fragments of pot. Glass and CBM were also recovered from this spit. At a depth of approximately 0.15m a large lens of sandy material became apparent. It was concentrated in the north western quadrant of the test pit and appeared to be a dump of material.

The second spit (102) was very similar to (101). The soil was friable dark blackish brown clayey (20%) silt (80%). Finds were comparable to those found in (101) (25 nails and iron objects, glass shards, occasional pottery, bone, charcoal). These finds also exhibited signs of burning. The dump of sandy material identified in (101) was also present in (102), but it became more disturbed and spread into the north eastern quadrant.

At a depth of 0.27m a change became apparent as the natural mid brownish yellow silty clay appeared. A small sondage (103) was dug in the South Western corner to confirm that this was natural.

The natural (103) had been cut by [104]. This was an irregular sub circular cut. It seems likely that the dump of sandy material identified in (101) and (102) may have resulted from the digging of this feature. The cut was 0.11m in depth and measured 0.34m North-South and 0.30m East-West. The fill (105) of [104] was very similar to (101) and (102). It was

dark blackish brown clayey silt. It contained charcoal (5%), burnt tin foil, one iron object and glass.

## Interpretation

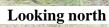
No evidence was found for activities predating the construction of the houses along Church Cowley Road. It seems likely that the evidence uncovered reflects a bonfire that took place at the bottom of the rear garden. The purpose of the cut [104] is not known but it is likely that it was dug as part of the construction of the bonfire as it was filled with the same material as 101 and 102. It is probable that the evidence represents a single bonfire as no stratigraphy was identified in the burning layers.

# Results

Spit	Type of Deposit	Description	Sample	Plan/ Section
100	Turf	0.03m of turf removed by hand. Dark blackish	N/A	N/A
1mx1m pit		brown friable clayey silt.		
		Inclusions: rounded stones evenly distributed <1%.		
		Charcoal lumps 5mm-15mm (<3%). Shell (<1%)		
		Finds: Pottery fragments (<1%), bone fragments		
		(<1%), 2 glass shards, Fe nails, Fe lump (fashioned),		
		hexagonal nut, CBM		
101	Topsoil	Depth 0.20m. Trowelled.	N/A	N/A
	below 100	Dark blackish brown clayey silt (90%)		
		Inclusions: small rounded stones (<1%). Charcoal		
		(10%). Sandy lens in north 0.5mx0.1m		
		Finds: lots of Fe nails (40+), occasional glass, CBM,		
		metal belt buckle, bone (<1%), pottery fragments		
		(<1%).		
		Evidence of burning (bonfire).		
102	Spit	Depth 0.04m. trowelled	N/A	N/A
	below 101	Dark blackish brown clayey silt (80%).		
		Inclusions: stones, charcoal (<10%). Sandy lens		
		Finds: 25 Fe nails, 5 glass sherds, pottery, occasional		
		oyster shell, bone fragments, modern brick, glazed		
		pot, charcoal		
		Evidence of burning (bonfire).		
103	layer below	Mid brownish yellow silty clay. Trowelled.	N/A	N/A
	102	Inclusions: stone and river pebbles (0.01m-0.15m)		
	natural	randomly distributed		
		Finds: none		
		Natural layer		
104	Cut	Cuts 103. Filled by 105	N/A	N/A
		Irregular sub circular cut.		
		0.34m N-S and 0.30m E-W. Depth 0.14m		
		Cut made during construction of bonfire.		
105	Fill	Fill of 104. trowelled	N/A	N/A
		Dark blackish brown silty clay (80%).		
		Inclusions: Charcoal (<5%)		
		Finds: Fe object, tin foil, glass fragment, flint		









**Looking north with sondage**