

EOXP TEST PIT 13

Rose Hill Allotments, Iffley: lower allotment next to western fence, gardened by John and Corinne Grimley Evans.

Date of Excavation: 11-12 June 2011

Area excavated: 1 x 1m

Weather conditions: sunny and dry, 11th; overcast with torrential rain in afternoon, 12th.

Excavators: John Grimley Evans, Caroline Durrant, Steve Nicholson and Swii Yii Lim.

Report by: Caroline Durrant and the team.


GPS location and height above sea-level: SP 5282 0353, 72.1 OD.

Summary of Excavation

Test pit 13 was located on the western edge of the Rose Hill allotments in an area sloping to the west and the river. Historic Ordnance Survey maps show this area as agricultural land until the development of Abberbury Road. This particular area of the allotments was, however, also part of the Glebe field, the remnant of which survives to the west. There is known Iron Age and Romano-British archaeology within half a kilometre including burials, domestic surfaces and Roman kiln sites focused on Annesley Road. The wash of material down the hill over time will have resulted in a build-up of soil in this area. The current owners of the allotment have found worked flint and medieval pottery in digging the allotment.

Natural was reached at 0.7m below the surface – considerably deeper than in the test pits on higher ground to the east and demonstrating the slip of material down the hill. All the soil down to the clay above rubble limestone bedrock showed signs of human influence, the clay pipe remains suggesting the presence of agricultural labourers. The pottery assemblage was fairly mixed as might be expected with the slippage and mixing of soils.

Context	Description	Comments
100	Ground surface – no turf: removed by hand. Depth 0.02m	
101	Topsoil: loosened by spade, removed by trowel, all material sieved. Damp on surface, friable dark blackish brown sandy silt (70%). Root and worm activity. Depth 0.2m from surface. Inclusions: 3% small mixed stones angular and rounded limestone cobbles and degraded limestone 10-50mm; occasional charcoal flecks; v occasional fossil fragments. Finds: c 2% of context; fragments of glass and CBM; pottery sherds including glazed ceramics; one fragment of clay pipe and one bone fragment.	Slightly stony allotment topsoil.

<p>102</p>	<p>Subsoil: damp, sticky and compact mid brown silty clay. Root disturbance. 0.40m from surface, 0.2m deep. Inclusions: 2% flecks charcoal; 3% rounded river pebbles, occasional angular limestone and v occasional larger stones. Finds: Occasional bone, pottery sherds, clay pipe stem, Fe (iron) object – nail – and fragments glass.</p>	<p>Less organic, more clay subsoil to (101), with more charcoal.</p>
<p>103</p>	<p>Above natural. Damp compact, mid brownish orange slightly sandy clay. Depth from 0.4m to 0.65-0.7m below surface. Large root. Spade and trowel. Inclusions: occasional smooth rounded larger stones, more than 102, occasional smaller stones (2%) – fewer than 102; v occasional charcoal at top of context not lower down. Fewer inclusions generally. Finds: occasional CBM fragments, occasional pottery sherds, fragments of clay pipe. Fewer finds than 102 and decreasing with depth.</p>	<p>Sondage in SE corner: 0.5m². Soil increasingly clay with depth, no perceptible boundaries, just gradual change. Fewer finds and inclusions with depth.</p> 
<p>104 Natural</p>	<p>Uneven context across bottom of sondage, c 0.7m down from surface. Damp, light yellow crumbly, degraded limestone. Inclusions: occasional small fossils otherwise sterile.</p>	<p>Spit down to natural rubble limestone bedrock below sandy clay.</p> 