

EOXP TEST PIT 15
The Rectory, Mill Lane, Iffley

Date of Excavation: 14-15 June 2011

Area excavated: 1 x 1m

Weather conditions: sunny and dry 14th, with showers on 15th.

Excavators: Mandy Bellamy, Marilyn Ching, Val Forsdyke, Mary Lane, Brian Leigh, Denise Leigh, Mike Newman, David Pinches, Neil Stevenson, Chris Turley.

Report by: David Pinches and Chris Turley.


GPS location and height above sea-level: SP 5265 0349, 65.0 OD

Summary of Excavation

Test pit 15 was located in the garden of the Rectory Iffley in a lawn sloping down to the river to the west. Historic Ordnance Survey maps and the proximity of the church suggest that this area should be in the centre of the medieval village. However the land may always have been within the confines of a medieval manor close to domestic buildings rather than heavily-used village or agricultural land. 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 land just to the west of the test pit lawn slopes very steeply to the river and had been used as a 19th century bottle dump. There was the possibility of movement of soil due to the slopes. Although a sondage was dug to nearly a metre in depth the excavators were not convinced that natural had been reached and it may be that there has been considerable build up of deposits alongside the construction work of the centuries. The finds and nature of the soil suggested that the area of the test pit was, perhaps from the medieval period onwards, part of an orchard or garden area. As compared to Mill Lane or Church way there were very few domestic and/or agricultural finds, and this seems to have been an area peripheral to the main domestic activity. There was also relatively little modern material so the area had seen relatively little disturbance in the 20th century. However, the layers below 1m may be the most productive: colluvium or hill-wash is of some significance in Rose Hill/Iffley and is masking archaeology.

Context	Description	Comments
100	Turf layer: removed by hand. Depth 0.07m	
101	Topsoil: loosened by spade, removed by trowel, all material sieved. Damp, friable mid blackish brown sandy silt. Root and worm activity. Depth 0.2m from surface. Inclusions: 3% mixed stones angular and rounded limestone cobbles and degraded limestone 10-50mm; 2% charcoal flecks to small twigs; shell, fossil (gryphea) and flint fragments. Finds: c 3% of context; fragments of	Organic homogenous garden topsoil, not worked over recently, with few stones and little modern material.

	glass and CBM; pottery sherds including glazed ceramics; iron (Fe) fragments.	
102	<p>Subsoil: damp, friable-compact light brown sandy silt; increasingly silty with depth Root disturbance. 0.26m deep (0.46m from surface).</p> <p>Inclusions: 3% large flecks charcoal max 20mm; 5% cobbles, larger stones more rounded; fewer fossil and flint fragments.</p> <p>Finds: from 0.32m deep more mortar and CBM (brick and tile); pottery sherds including medieval pottery (Brill-Boarstal); fragments animal bone and teeth; mortar and Fe (iron) fragments.</p>	<p>Less organic subsoil to (101), with larger stones and more charcoal. Increasing signs of human activity with depth: silt, mortar, pottery and CBM. Finds, especially pottery concentrated in south of pit.</p> 
103	<p>Damp compact, mid yellowish brown sandy silt-clay. Depth from 0.46m – 0.93m below surface. Fine roots. Spade and trowel.</p> <p>Inclusions: v occasional small stones and shell fragments 5-30mm; larger stones appeared at 0.95m – 5% with sizes from 230mm-110mm x 170mm-90mm.</p> <p>Finds: occasional pottery sherds including possible Romano-British grey ware; pre-1850 glass (spot identified by Chris Turley); animal tooth and small amount CBM fragments.</p>	<p>Southern half of pit dug down in two steps in sondage. Eastern half (0.5m²) from 0.46m – 0.77m and western half (0.5m²) from 0.77m – 0.93m.</p> 