

EOXP TEST PIT 18, Bartlemas 3: BT_3 Bartlemas Farmhouse grounds

Owners: Christopher and Sarah Franks

Date of Excavation: 21-22 June 2011

Area excavated: 1 x 1m

Weather conditions: sunny and dry 21st June, heavy rain 22nd June.

Excavators: Louise Bailey, Mandy Bellamy, Patricia Marsh, David Pinches, Julie Thomson, Mick and Catherine Winter.

Report by: the team with Louise Bailey and David Pinches.




GPS location and height above sea-level: SP 4534 2055, 69m OD

Summary of Excavation

Test pit 18 was located in the garden of Bartlemas Farmhouse in an area of rough vegetation, 1.6m west of a modern fence-line and 7.9m south of the south side of the boundary ditch after its turn west. The N-S course of this boundary ditch is thought to be very old and may mark the edge of the Leper Hospital's lands (see test pits BT_1, 2 and 4; and Bartlemas Chapel excavation reports for more information). In recent times the watercourse was diverted north of this test-pit, through a neat right-angle to the west and then culverted to run under Cowley Road. Test pit BT_3 was placed with the intention of catching the side of the old north-south course of the ditch and sampling the soil deposits to the west, and therefore outside, of this old boundary. Test pit BT_4 just to the east, but on the other side of both the old ditch line and the modern fence, would provide a comparison. The ditch line seems to be marked by vigorous scrub tree growth and it was therefore impossible to get any closer to its suspected original course than BT_3's location. This area of land was associated with Bartlemas Cottage to the south until quite recently; this structure had, during the nineteenth century, been reputed to include a barn with a forge/smithy.

This test produced very different results to test pit BT_4 (Test Pit 19), just to the east. Large amounts of metal work and slag supported the idea of a smithy to the south; clearly large amounts of waste from work there had simply been dumped in the area of the test-pit. Natural clay was reached very quickly in the north of the test pit but the eastern side caught the edge of the old drainage ditch; in the south of the test pit was discovered the N-S ditch's junction with another smaller ditch running E-W. The rubbish from the smithy had been dumped into this shallower ditch, which may well have been a land boundary ditch marking the edge of a field to the north. Excavation in the ground of the Old Nursery School site suggested that land on that site, to the north of the pit and west of the hospital ditch, had been agricultural for some considerable time, with no evidence for any other use discovered.

Context	Description	Comments
100	Rough vegetation layer: removed by hand. Depth 0.07m	
101	Richly organic topsoil: loosened by spade, removed by trowel, all material sieved/sorted. Dry loose-friable dark	Organic topsoil; rich in rotted vegetation. Finds dominated by rubbish

	<p>greyish brown sandy silt; very organic. Root and worm activity. To depth of 0.1m from surface. Gradual boundary to (102)</p> <p>Inclusions: 4% small angular limestone cobbles-pebbles max size 600mm, poorly sorted, and degraded limestone 10-50mm; 3% charcoal flecks and occasional fossil oyster (gryphea).</p> <p>Finds: c 10% of context: pottery sherds including glazed ceramics; large proportion of iron (Fe) fragments and objects; glass marble (bottle stopper).</p>	<p>from smithy to south. The top of (102) as revealed was more organic in the SE and NW with clay and the occasional large stone across the rest.</p>  <p>Looking south</p>
<p>102 fill Fill of [105] [106]</p>	<p>Ditch fill: dry firm mid yellowish brown sandy clay with; increasingly clay with depth with small yellow clay lenses. Root and worm disturbance; much iron staining from finds. 0.15m deep (c 0.25m from surface); 0.5m N-S in E from S edge to 0.6m in W; from 0.1m wide from E side in N to 0.2m at join with W-E ditch. Gradual boundary to (102)/(103); clear to (104) clay.</p> <p>Inclusions: 6% angular limestone chunks 0.05-0.02m; 2% shell fragments 0.07m and 2% charcoal fragments.</p> <p>Finds: 3% of context: ceramic sherds; modern pottery sherds; dominated by iron fragments; fragments clear glass; clay pipe pieces</p>	<p>Organic disturbed ditch fills: narrower ditch running W-E along south of trench, 0.5m wide; possibly a field boundary will infill from the smithy. Edge of the N-S ditch caught in east of trench; the two fills could not be distinguished.</p>  <p>Looking north</p>
<p>103 fill Fill of [105] [106]</p>	<p>Lower fill: dry compact yellowish brown sandy clay. 0.1m deep; base 0.35m from surface; 0.4m W-E x 0.1m N-S across south of pit. Gradual boundary to (102), clear to clay natural. Dipping from N to S.</p> <p>Inclusions: 5% of context overall; angular limestone pebbles poorly sorted max 0.1m; larger angular limestone cobbles at base in SE, mixed 0.1-0.3m; occasional charcoal and snail shells.</p> <p>Finds: fewer than (102); iron (Fe) fragments and lead (Pb); occasional large fragments glass; willow pattern pottery; CBM</p>	<p>Lower fill of the E-W ditch; environmental sample 1 taken from this fill. Large stones at base in SE corner belong to fill of N-S ditch.</p> 

		Looking north
104 natura I cut by [105]/ [106]	Natural clay: firm damp greyish blue clay with yellow lenses and streaks. Sterile. Only 0.15m below ground surface where not cut into by ditches: compare to BT_2.	Natural
105 cut	Cut for N-S ditch just caught in east of trench. Impossible to decide depth, width; bends slightly to SE. Filled by (102) and (103). Seems to be cut by [106]	N-S boundary ditch: probably earlier than ditch [106].
106 cut	Cut for W-E ditch: northern half of ditch caught in southern half of pit. Near vertical sides, sharp break at base, flat base, truncated. 0.3m deep; probably c 1m wide. Cuts edge of [105].	W-E field boundary ditch, cut into edge of larger ditch [105]

