

TEST PIT 26 (20 Long Lane, Littlemore)

Date of Excavation: 3rd and 4th Sep 2011

Area excavated: 1m x 1m

Conditions: Day 1 sunny/cloudy and dry; Day 2 overnight rain and shower in the morning.

Excavators: Steve Nicholson, Tricia Hallam, Greg Daniel, Alan Davis, Nathalie Garfinkle, Bob Whysman

Report by: Steve Nicholson, with assistance from Tricia Hallam and the team.

GPS location and height above sea level: SP 5406 0317, 72.5m OD

A test pit was dug in the back garden of a semi-detached house built in the 1930's. The site was used for agriculture prior to the 1930's, including as an apple orchard, and neighbouring gardens still have old apple trees in them. The pottery finds demonstrate activity, but not necessarily occupation, during the medieval period.

The pit was close to mature trees and shrubs and had numerous small roots which penetrated the excavation at all but the lowest level beside the large limestone boulders which appeared about a metre down at the natural level.

Summary of Excavation

The test pit was dug, overall, to a depth of 0.33m, a further 0.67m in a sondage 0.5m x 1m to the North of the pit. The natural geology was reached and comprised limestone bedrock.

The first 0.2m spit (101) was a mid greyish-brown garden soil much disturbed by roots from nearby trees. It was rich in modern finds and mixed period pottery, including some glazed pottery which is probably Medieval but could possibly be Roman. Root, worm and possible rodent disturbance.

The second spit (102) was also mid greyish-brown and contained fewer finds but was again disturbed by roots and worms. We changed context after 0.1m as a distinct change was noticed in the soil and it was decided to assign Context (103).

The third Context (103) Started showing yellow sandy patches within the mid-greyish brown, with small blackish staining. The inclusions had some angular limestone fragments (largest 65mm). After a short time and having found few finds, it was decided to dig a Sondage to the North of the pit. A new Context (104) was assigned.. Some CBM, some glazed, square head nail.

The fourth Context (104 Sondage) mid greyish-brown with yellow-orange, some small bones, CBM. Roots, worm and rodent burrow contamination.

The fifth spit (105 Sondage) mid greyish-brown with yellow-orange patches, some pottery, some glazed, and small bone, more finds than 104.

The sixth Context (106 Sondage) Brownly orange to white limestone. This context was started due to the large limestone surface that appeared mid sondage. Further boulders duly exposed but with complete absence of any flaky limestone fragments or stones and pebbles that occurred at higher levels. These boulders appeared to be the naturally occurring limestone for this area. The soil adjacent was compacted silty sand, hard to trowel out.

Results

Spit or context	Type of deposit	Description	Soil sample	Draw ings
Spit (101)	Layer	0.05m of turf and topsoil removed by hand; 0.2m deep. Mid-greyish-brown sandy silt.. A few limestone angular fragments and charcoal flecks. Stones 2%, mostly rounded pebbles 5-30mm. Contaminated by roots , worms throughout. Finds: CBM, clay pipe, small amount bone, pottery mixture, glazed, various periods, possible Roman Glazed and Possible Medieval pot, clay pipe , very many nails, some screws, metal hinges.. modern penny coin. Garden soil, much disturbed.		
Spit (102)	Layer: below Spit (101)	0.2m to 0.3m. Mid greyish-brown sandy silt. Stone mostly rounded pebbles 20-50mm, some angular limestone, some flints, flecks of charcoal. Finds: nails and metal fittings. CBM, some glazed, few pieces bone, some glass. Disturbed garden soil.		
Context (103)	Layer: below Spit (102)	0.3m to 0.33m. Mid greyish-brown with yellow -orange sandy patches, some small blackish staining. Stones 2% mostly rounded pebbles 20-50mm, some angular limestone pieces largest 65mm, charcoal flecks, some blackened silt. Finds: CBM, Some glazed pottery, flints, two square head nails. Disturbed soil.		
Context (104) Excavated in Sondage 0.5m x 1m	Layer: below Context (103)	0.33m to 0.8m .Mid greyish brown with yellow orange sandy patches. Stones, quartzite pebbles 5%, limestone, charcoal. Small roots, possible rodent burrow, which could have disturbed the deposits. Finds: CBM, small bones Disturbed soil.	1	
Context (105) Excavated in Sondage 0.5m x 1m	Layer: below context (104)	0.8m to 0.9m. Mid greyish-brown with yellow-orange patches. Limestone and quartzite pebbles 10%. Charcoal flecks. Small roots and worm contamination, which could have disturbed deposits. Finds: pottery, some glazed, and bone. Disturbed soil.		
Context (106) Excavated in Sondage 0.5 x 1m	Layer: below context (105)	0.9m to 1.0m. Brownly-orange to white limestone (boulder). Limestone fragments and pebbles and some larger 50mm stones, which soon completely disappear as the limestone boulders are uncovered. The soil beside the boulders contains no observable stony inclusions. Probes were pushed down either side of boulders, reaching maximum probe length to south-east of boulders. Soil very compact sandy silt. Believed to be natural level. Finds: one small bone and pig tooth. Appeared undisturbed apart from finds.		yes



Top of Spit 102.



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