

TEST PIT 31 (TP31)

Location: Bartlemas Allotments, Bartlemas Close (Links).

Area excavated: 1m x 1m in grass

Date of Excavation: 26 November 2011

Conditions: Dry, but dull and overcast

Excavators: Joe Goodman, Jenni and Paul Laird, Paula Levick, Catriona Manners, Caroline Morrell, Steve Nicholson.

Report: Prepared by Paula Levick, based on the work and observations of the team.

GPS location and height over sea level: SP 5347 0544, 67.5m OD.

Summary: Test Pit 31 is the second of a number of planned test pits to be dug in allotments that border the south and east of Bartlemas Chapel. The aim of these small excavations is to see if it is possible to determine the extent of activity around the chapel prior to the boundary wall being constructed. The location of the wall and test pit is shown in Figure 1. This test pit was located in an area of the allotment that had not been cultivated in living memory, and across a slight rise in the ground.

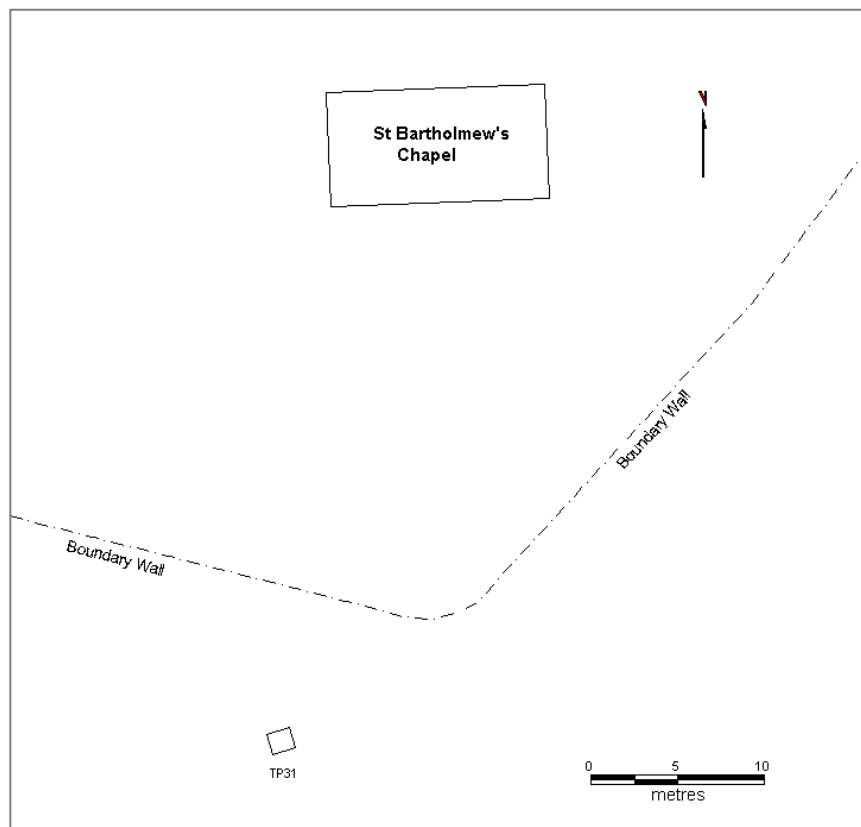



Figure 1: Location of TP31

Discussion: The removal of the turf revealed a dispersed spread of calcareous limestone gravel, sand and clay ('hoggin') [31000] which had a maximum depth of 10-14cm in the central part of the test pit. This deposit did not extend across the entire area and could be seen only in the south-facing section. The deposit contained no artefacts and represented a modern dump of builders ballast.

Immediately below [31000] was a 30 cm thick deposit of mid-brown unconsolidated clay with small pockets of mid-brown silty soils and occasional angular and rounded limestones up to 5cm [31001]. This deposit was heavily compacted, most probably owing to its location close to the play area and barbeque site and was removed with a mattock and spade where necessary. The upper 20 cm was artefact-rich, comprising finds of medieval to late 20th century date, including sherds of modern-medieval pottery (1%), ceramic building material (1%), bones and teeth of domestic farm animals, 17th century pipe bowls and stems, and iron nails. Fragments of *Gryphaea* (fossil oysters) were also recovered attesting to the disturbed nature of this deposit.

Owing to time constraints, a small sondage 40 cm x 40 cm was dug in the north-west of the test pit to investigate further deposits. One further context [31002] was briefly investigated to a depth of 15 cm within the sondage. This comprised mid-brown clay marbled with orange sandy clays and inclusions of sub-rounded limestone cobbles up to 10 cm in size, and the stem of a clay pipe, which indicated the natural had not been reached. Figure 2 shows these deposits in section, Figure 3 provides a plan view of the excavated area.

Subject: TP 31; north face, south facing section
Date: 26 November 2011
Scale: 1:20
Drawn by: Steve Nicholson; assisted by Joe Goodman

Key:
 Limestone

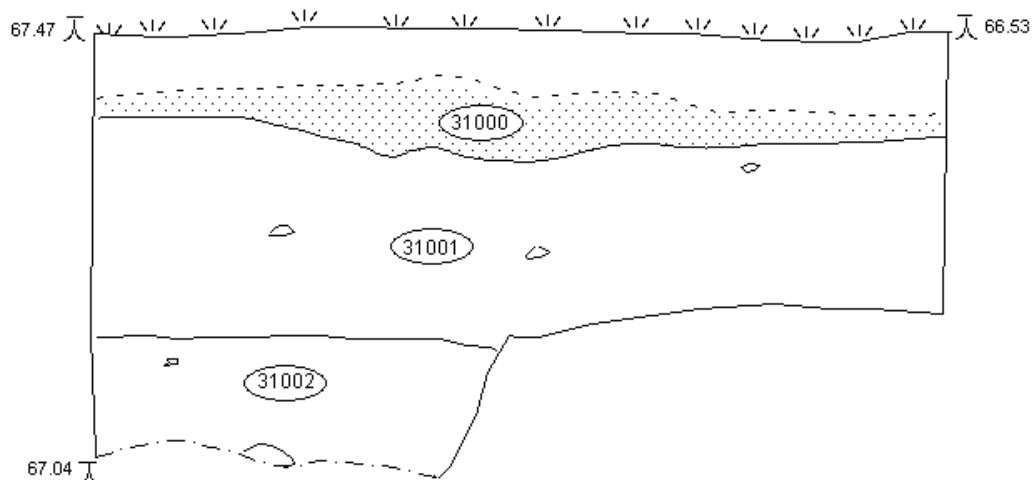


Figure 2: Section- north face of TP23



Figure 2: Plan view of excavated test pit.

Interpretation:

No cultivated soils, as would be expected if this area had been an allotment, were found in the test pit, and deposit [31001] appears to be the heavier, unworkable soils removed during the preparation of a nearby allotment. The artefacts also probably result from this event, and were possibly curated while the soils from that allotment were being prepared, and later discarded. [31002] also appears to be an uncultivated deposit and might represent an earlier land surface. As such it should be considered worthy of further investigation in subsequent test pits in this region.



Figure 4: The Team – Test Pit 31

Summary

Context	Description	Comments
31000	An uneven spread of calcareous limestone gravel, sand and clay ('hoggin'), maximum depth 10-14cm. No artefacts.	A modern dump of builders ballast. The deposit did not extend across the entire area and could be seen only in the south-facing section.
31001	A 30cm thick deposit of mid-brown unconsolidated clay with small pockets of mid-brown silty soils and occasional angular and rounded limestones up to 5cm. Heavily compacted, most probably owing to its location close to the play area and barbeque site. The upper 20cm was artefact-rich, comprising finds of medieval to late 20 th century date, including sherds of modern-medieval pottery (1%), ceramic building material (1%), bones and teeth of domestic	Disturbed deposit removed with a mattock and spade where necessary.

	farm animals, 17 th century pipe bowls and stems, and iron nails. Fragments of <i>Gryphaea</i> (fossil oysters) were also recovered	
31002	Mid-brown clay marbled with orange sandy clays and inclusions of sub-rounded limestone cobbles up to 10cm in size. Stem of a clay pipe was the only artefact.	Investigated in 40cm x 40cm in the north-west of the test pit. The natural was not reached.