

## **EOAP Test Pit: 47**

**Location:** Northfield School, OX4 6DQ

**Date of Excavation:** 3/7/12

**Area of excavation:** 1x2m

**Weather conditions:** Overcast, light rain

**Excavators:** OJB, SN, staff and pupils from Northfield School



**Report by:** Gill Mellor/Leigh Mellor/Olaf Bayer

**Location and elevation:** E454690 N202541 H60.22m OD

**Introduction:** A 1m x 2m test pit was excavated on rough grass immediately to north of Northfield School football pitches and to the South of the present day course of the Northfield Brook. This area was open fields up until the construction of the school in the 1960s. The test pit was targeted to investigate an anomaly discovered by a previous gradiometer survey in summer 2011 (see [www.archeox.net/investigations/geophysical-survey-northfield-school-blackbird-leys-oxford](http://www.archeox.net/investigations/geophysical-survey-northfield-school-blackbird-leys-oxford)).

**Excavation summary:** It is considered likely that the circular feature identified from the previous geophysical survey and aerial photographs represents introduced ferrous material within the make-up /levelling layer (501-503) in the 1960s while football pitches were being constructed. It is not, as considered in original gradiometer report, a Roman or prehistoric feature. The top of layer (504) represents the original ground surface prior to the construction of playing fields. Layer (504) is part of an extensive peat deposit associated with the Northfield Brook. Similar deposits have been encountered at the Kassam Stadium site, Ozone Leisure Park, Minchery Farm Paddock and Oxford Science Park to the west of Northfield School.

**Results:**

Context	Type	Description	Soil sample	Comments/photo
500	layer	<p><b>Matrix:</b> Moist friable, mid/dark grey brown, slightly sandy silty clay.</p> <p><b>Inclusions:</b> Organic rich – very occasional limestone fragments – angular/sub-angular 50x45x25mm Frequent roots</p> <p><b>Finds:</b> pottery, Fe object, brick frags, occasional charcoal fragments</p> <p><b>Depth:</b> 0.18m</p> <p><b>Boundaries:</b> indistinct</p> <p><b>Excavated:</b> spades and trowels</p>	N/A	<p>Grass + humic turf/topsoil</p> 
501/502/503	layer	<p><b>Matrix:</b> Firm, mid yellow grey brown, silty (10%) clay (40%) sand (50%)</p> <p><b>Inclusions:</b> occasional sub-angular limestone fragments, occasional charcoal</p> <p><b>Finds:</b> occasional pottery, brick, ?bone?, concrete fragments, occasional CBM, Fe &amp; Al objects, clay pipe</p> <p><b>Depth:</b> 0.72m</p> <p><b>Boundaries:</b> Indistinct with (500) above, distinct from (504) below</p> <p><b>Contamination:</b> occasional worms and roots, drawing down contamination from above</p> <p><b>Excavated:</b> trowel, mattock and spade</p>	N/A	<p>Make-up/levelling layer for playing fields presumable assoc with construction of Northfields school in 1960s</p> 



504	layer	<p><b>Matrix:</b> damp/friable brown black peat- slight clay silt fraction  <b>Inclusions:</b> 95%+ organic matter  <b>Finds:</b> some crushed brick in top of deposit plus one sherd pottery also in top/interface with (501/2/3)  <b>Depth:</b> 0.50m  <b>Boundaries:</b> Distinct to (501/2/3/) above  <b>Contamination:</b> Some modern contamination pressed into top.  <b>Excavated:</b> trowel, spade</p>	N/A	<p>Peat deposit, original ground level prior to construction of school also found at Kassam Stadium, Science Park and Minchery Paddock excavations, part of extensive peat deposits associated with Northfield Brook. Photo below shows the top of (504).</p> 
505	layer	<p><b>Matrix:</b> firm/damp, dark grey/black, slightly silty clay  <b>Inclusions:</b> organic matter c.5%, v occ fine sand  <b>Finds:</b> None  <b>Depth:</b> 0.12m  <b>Boundaries:</b> Indistinct with (504) above  <b>Contamination:</b> N/A  <b>Excavated:</b> trowel , spade</p>	N/A	<p>Grey clay at base of peat equivalent to context (1006) at Minchery Paddock. Top of 9505) is just visible below</p> 



Figure 1. Test pit location and topography

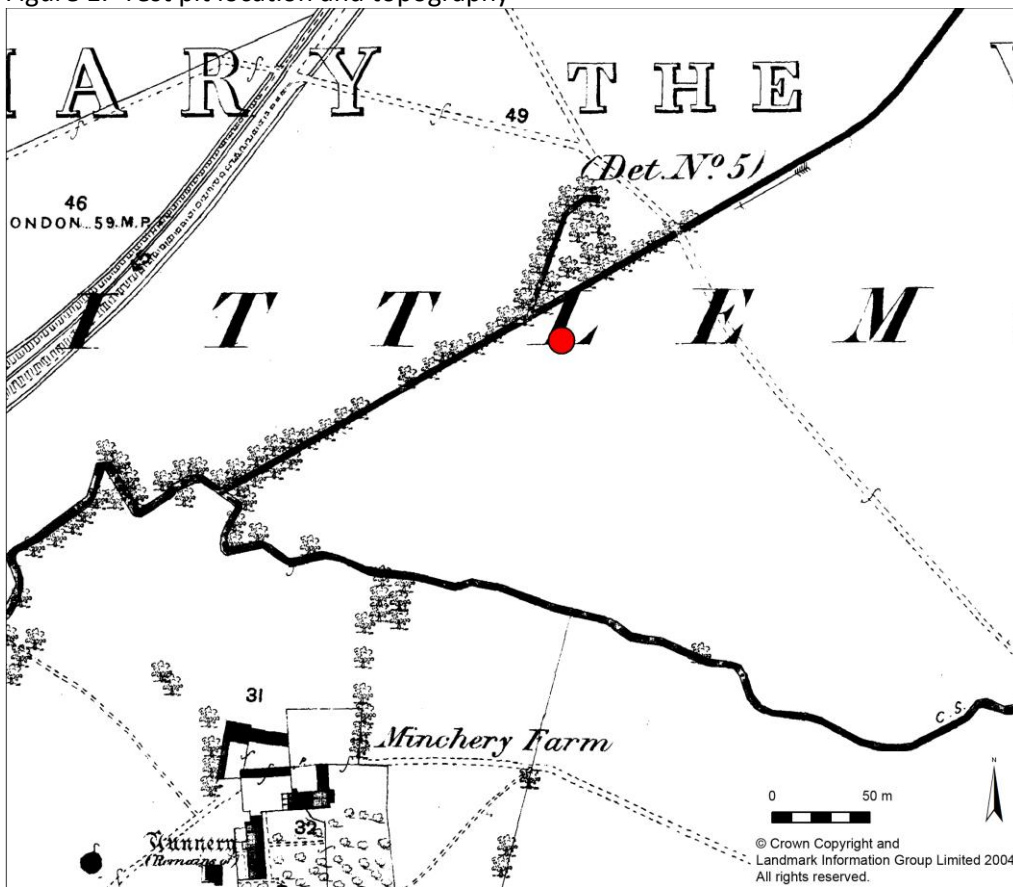


Figure 2. Test pit 47 c1880 (Ordnance Survey First Edition Mapping)