

## **EOXP TEST PIT 46**

**Location:** St Michael's C of E First School, Marston Road

**Date of Excavation:** 27 June 2012

**Area of excavation:** 1.0 x 1.0m

**Weather conditions:** Warm, overcast and humid

**Excavators:** Year 5, St Michael's School, JH, OB and JR

**Report by:** JH

**GPS Location and OD:** SP 5288 0701, 65m OD

### **Introduction**

The test pit was dug in the school field behind the buildings fronting onto Marston Road. As PE lessons were underway the pit had to be located away from the area over which gradiometry had been done by the Project team and Year 5 two weeks previously! On old Ordnance survey maps the outline of the modern school property shows as a field in all maps from the 1880s to the 1920s. The first school building appears in the 1930s. The map for the 1950s shows the same buildings but also an unusual zigzag structure at the top of the playing field. This narrow feature has 6 stretches making 3 zigzags. The whole thing is c 10m wide and c 45m long. No-one in the school knew anything about it but speculated that it might be related to the Second World War – perhaps a shelter or protective screen of some kind? Certainly the next edition of the OS map no longer showed the zigzag.

### **Excavation summary**

The natural clay geology was reached at a depth of between 0.32 - 0.38m. Context (100) consisted of turf and topsoil. Context (101) began c 0.1m below the turf-top and was only 0.05m deep. This first layer was humic, clayey topsoil with occasional pebbles, burnt flint and modern metal, brick, glass and pottery fragments.

Context (102) below was a slightly sandy, silty clay again containing pebbles, flint grit and charcoal but also brick, glass and slate fragments, and occasional bone and clay pipe fragments, with some pottery. (102) was between 0.15 and 0.17m deep and was clearly a layer disturbed by the demolishing or erection of a building: perhaps either the removal of the 'zigzag' or the building of the school. However the residual pottery, bone and clay pipe suggested the remains of an agricultural land surface, perhaps a plough soil. The last 0.05m of (102) were excavated in a 0.5m<sup>2</sup> sondage in the SE corner of the test pit. The final layer (103) above natural clay was dug in the sondage and proved to be a dump of brick and concrete, presumably from the same event as (102). This dump suggested that (102) and (103) were more likely to be the result of the demolition of the zigzag, which would have been located less than 10m away from the test pit.

No plan or section drawings were made, but there are sketches on the reverse of the context sheets.

## Results

| Spit/<br>context | Type of<br>deposit           | Description   | Soil<br>Sample | Comments   |
|------------------|------------------------------|---|----------------|--|
| (100)            | Layer                        | <b>Turf and humic top soil with turf</b> 0.1m deep.   | N/a            |  |
| (101)            | Layer                        | Damp, friable mid blackish brown slightly sandy, silty clay (60%). 0.1m from top; 0.03 – 0.05m deep.<br><b>Inclusions:</b> occasional sub-angular limestone pebbles (fine- medium) and river pebbles 1%; occasional charcoal >1%; limestone grit 1%<br><b>Finds:</b> glass, metal Fe (modern) 1%; tile fragment; burnt flint; flint fragments; modern pottery sherds; CBM: overall 5%<br>Clear boundaries to (102) worm and root disturbance.   | N/a            | Humic topsoil for playing field.<br><br><b>(101) looking north</b>   |
| (102)            | Layer                        | Damp, friable/firm mid yellowish grey slightly sandy/silty clay (75%); 0.15 – 0.17m deep. 0.5m <sup>2</sup> sondage begun at 0.25m from top in SE corner; lower 0.05m of (102) dug in sondage.<br><b>Inclusions:</b> charcoal; sub-angular fine-medium pebbles; fine-medium river pebbles 1-3%; fine flint gravel >1%; limestone grit 1% and occasional lenses of clay<br><b>Finds:</b> Brick fragments; occasional charcoal fragments, glass and pottery; Fe (incl. nails); occasional bone fragments; clay pipe fragments (incl. bowl): 3% context overall<br><b>CBM and glass discarded</b><br>Boundaries clear; worm and root disturbance | N/a            | Disturbed layer with building debris, re-deposited lumps of clay and residual bone and clay pipe.<br><br><b>(102) looking east</b> |
| (103)            | Layer<br>(dug in<br>sondage) | Compact light greyish yellow sandy slightly silty clay (80%); level at bottom 0.32 – 0.38 from top; 0.02 – 0.08m deep.  | N/a            | Dump of brick and concrete <b>above natural clay.</b>  |

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|  |  | <p><b>Inclusions:</b> limestone grit 1%;<br/>sub-angular fine-medium<br/>pebbles; fragments/lumps<br/>charcoal &gt;1%</p> <p><b>Finds:</b> brick and concrete<br/>lumps, 75% of context:<br/><b>discarded</b></p> <p>Boundaries clear; worm and<br/>root disturbance</p> |  |  <p><b>(103)/natural clay looking east</b></p> |
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