

## EOXP TEST PIT 2

### Boundary Brook Nature Park, Oxford Urban Wildlife Group

**Date of Excavation:** 7 November 2010 (work suspended because of heavy frost) and 6 July 2011

**Area excavated:** 1 x 1m

**Weather conditions:** very cold and wet (Nov.); changeable, warm, sunny spells (July)

**Excavators:** Marilyn Ching, Mark Franks, Brian Leigh, Denise Leigh, David Pinches. (Nov: Greg Collier, Mark Franks, Caroline Morrell, Ann Wood.)

**Report by:** Denise Leigh, David Pinches, Jane Harrison.

**GPS location and height above sea-level: SP 5325 0478, 59.5 OD**

### Summary of Excavation

Test pits 2 and 3 were located in an oval clearing in the nature park c. 30m NW-SE and 20m SW-NE. Test pit 2 was SE of TP 3 and in the SE of the clearing. Small trees are scattered across the clearing which is under rough grass and surrounded by thick brambly undergrowth with other small trees including willows and birch. The clearing had not been dug for some years but had been worked as allotments until c. 10 years previously. In all the historic Ordnance Survey maps the area is part of a field system.

Slight earthworks in the clearing suggested the paths between and boundaries of the old allotment plots. These earthworks were plotted using the plane table in July 2011, while the test-pits were being completed. Although most of the low narrow banks and shallow ditches could be related to allotment layout, there were indications of earlier features which might be linked to the previous agricultural use. The ground slopes gently down from the highest point in the Nature Park at the reserve boundary to the NW.

The test pit was dug to a depth of 0.3m down to the natural clay which sloped up to the NW at a slightly steeper gradient than the modern ground surface. A small sondage 0.2m<sup>2</sup> was dug 0.15m deep in the NW corner to confirm the clay was not redeposited natural material. Interestingly the layers above the clay in the test pit were rich in charcoal, slag, and other evidence for burning as well as small amounts of iron material. Although topsoil was surprisingly shallow, the soils were otherwise consistent with recent use as an allotment.

Context	Description	Comments
100	<b>Turf:</b> removed by hand. Depth 0.07m	
101	<b>Topsoil:</b> loosened by spade, removed by trowel, all material sieved. Firm dark, blackish brown clayey silt with worm activity and root disturbance. 0.2m deep. <b>Inclusions:</b> frequent charcoal flecks; small angular flint pieces c. 0.02m c.1%; rounded, limestone pebbles c. 0.03m and limestone flecks c. 5%; occasional fragments of fossil shell. <b>Finds:</b> all less than 1%. Fragments of	<b>Organic garden soil with a thin spread of abraded domestic material. Finds reduce with depth.</b>

	<p>animal bone, sherds of post-medieval and modern pottery, brick fragments, small amounts of ferrous material and glass fragments.</p>	 <p><b>Looking north-west</b></p>
<p><b>102</b></p>	<p><b>Topsoil:</b> as 101 to depth of 0.25m below surface.</p>	<p><b>Same as 101 but fewer if similar finds.</b></p>
<p><b>103</b> (dug in July 2011)</p>	<p><b>Lower topsoil:</b> damp compact silty clay with occasional lenses of yellow clay. Disturbed by roots, dug by hand and all material sieved. To depth of 0.3m above natural greenish grey clay with occasional yellow clay lenses and fossil shell. <b>Inclusions:</b> charcoal flecks and fragments c. 3%; occasional larger rounded cobbles max. size 0.06m, 3%; occasional gravel 1% and occasional angular flint fragments. <b>Finds:</b> occasional pottery sherds (incl. modern and 1 possible roman); CBM; fragments of animal bone; bloomery slag and clinker; occasional mortar and glass. Only 1% of context as excavated</p>	<p><b>Increasingly clayey with depth but well-worked and organic topsoil without subsoil above natural.</b> <b>More organic and more finds proportionately than 102.</b></p>  <p><b>Looking south-east</b></p>