

# **EOXP Test Pit 65, Ark T Centre, adjacent to storage shed**

**Area excavated:** 1m x 1m

**Date of Excavation:** 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2013

**Conditions:** Cloud with sunny spells and occasional light drizzle.

**Method of excavation:** spade, trowel and mattock. Excavated soil sieved.

**Excavators:** Christopher Lewis, Leigh Mellor, Tim Lee, Jeanne Peskett

**Report by:** Tim Lee

**GPS location and height over sea level:** SP 53039 03630, 75m OD

## **Introduction**

In November 2011 two test pits were dug in the grounds of the Ark T Centre. The first, EOXp Test Pit 5 (AKT 1), was on the eastern side of the grounds, adjoining Crowell Road. This revealed a medieval ground surface and a possible Romano-British V shaped ditch. There was very little modern material but finds included medieval pottery sherds in good condition and a fragment of white ware mortaria. The site of this test pit was at least a metre above the pavement of Crowell Road and it was concluded that this was a result of hollowing which may have occurred during the medieval and post-medieval centuries before the road was surfaced.

The second test pit, EOXp Test Pit 6 (AKT 2), was to the west of TP5, in the central garden of the Church grounds. This pit was much less productive and the natural orange and brown mottled sand was reached after only 0.3m of excavation. Finds included modern pottery and domestic debris together with a small number of probable Roman and medieval pottery in small pieces. It was concluded that the original ground surface of this area had been machine stripped during the construction of the Church and the topsoil had been moved in from somewhere else in the vicinity of the building.

The current excavation is on the west side of the Church grounds, 3m from the boundary of the property where the ground drops steeply to Beauchamp Lane. It was hoped that the excavation might reveal some of the nature of the build-up of material on the west side of the Ark-T grounds

This excavation took place to coincide with the opening of a new play ground which has now been built on the site of TP6. Visitors to the opening were invited to view and take part in the excavation. This offer was taken up by perhaps a dozen young children who had great fun digging in the test pit for buried treasure and dinosaurs!!

## **Summary of Excavation**

Natural sand was reached at over 0.5m down – so deeper than in the centre of the Ark-T site. An undisturbed medieval layer was also excavated.

## **Interpretation**

This test pit clearly reached a medieval activity layer buried beneath redeposited soil used to build up the ground during the construction of the church and earlier. The

drop to the road is created as much by the road being cut into the land as the land being built-up on the Ark-T side of the wall. But the western boundary was clearly in place in the medieval period as the layers with medieval pottery were still higher than the road-level.

Spit/ context	Type of deposit	Description	Soil sample	Drawings
<b>Spit (101)</b>	Layer below turf (100)	0.1m of turf removed by hand; spit 0.08 deep. Mid-yellowish brown sandy silt (60%). Very occasional sand lenses of medium course sand (3%). Inclusions – occasional river pebbles and sub-angular limestone pebbles (0.5m) >3%; very occasional flint fragments >1%; occasional charcoal flecks >1% <b>Finds:</b> Roof tile, Fe objects, clay pipe, slate, glass, pottery – small abraded sherds including medieval, blue and white china >3% context. Occasional chunk of CBM maximum 0.15m. <b>Garden soil with domestic and building debris. The roof tile looked identical to those on the Church indicating significant disturbance of the ground during and after construction of the Church in 1960s</b>	None taken	Sketch plan  Too many small children around to include photos without parental consent!
<b>Spit (102)</b>	Layer below (101)	Diffuse boundary with (101) above. Light mid yellowish brown sandy silt (60%). Losing the lenses of coarser builder's type sand. Inclusions – river pebbles (0.03m); sub-angular limestone pebbles (0.03m) >3%; occasional flint fragments (0.01m) >1%; charcoal flecks (more than in 101) evenly distributes >2%. <b>Finds:</b> Pottery sherds incl. medieval; bone fragments; CBM; clay pipe; Pb; Fe; >3%. Fewer finds than 101.  <b>Garden sub-soil: finds diminishing with depth</b>		
<b>Spit (103)</b>	Layer below (102)	Light mid-yellowish brown sandy silt (60%). Inclusions – burnt stone <1%, river pebbles <1% (less than 102), charcoal, angular limestone 5% <b>Finds:</b> pottery incl. large sherds of medieval, bone, glass (window), Fe object (nail)  <b>Increase in stones, collection burnt stones; disturbed subsoil – incl. medieval component</b>		
<b>Spit (104)</b> Sondage 0.5m x 1.0m in southern half of pit	Layer below (103)	Light mid-yellowish brown sandy silt (60%). Inclusions: burnt stone c. 20%, charcoal (less than 103) <b>Finds:</b> bone, medieval pottery; no modern intrusions.  <b>Medieval layer</b>		
<b>Spit (105)</b>	Layer below western half of (104)	Light mid-yellowish brown sandy silt (60%). Inclusions: angular limestone (150 x 80 x 60mm), charcoal <b>Finds:</b> medieval pottery, bone fragments, ironstone  <b>Medieval layer</b>		
<b>Spit (106)</b>	Layer below eastern half of (104)	Yellowy-orange sand with dark spots <b>Finds:</b> none <b>Staining from roots which have grown down into the sand and then decomposed – same phenomenon as observed in TP6. Natural sand</b>		