



REPORT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL TEST PITTING AT EPIACUM ROMAN FORT



22nd Sept. - 1st Oct. 2017

Prepared by Dr. Rob Young for Epiacum Heritage Ltd.



REPORT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL TEST PITTING

EPIACUM - 22nd Sept. - 1st Oct. 2017

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Whitley Castle (*Epiacum*), a Scheduled Ancient Monument, is a large and uniquely shaped Roman fort, situated north-west of Alston in Cumbria. It was built early in the 2nd century and was, at least, partly demolished and rebuilt around AD 200. Whereas Roman forts are normally "playing-card shaped" (rectangular with rounded corners), Whitley Castle is lozenge-shaped and was constructed to fit the available site topography. In addition, it has a complex defensive earthwork system with multiple banks and ditches outside the usual stone ramparts. The fort appears to have been sited to control and protect lead mining in the area as well as to support the border defences of Hadrian's Wall.

1.2 The fort is located about 15 miles south of the Wall. The Maiden Way Roman Road connected it to the fort of *Magnae* (Carvoran) on the Wall and *Bravoniacum* (Kirkby Thore) on the Carlisle–York road. (Fig. 1)

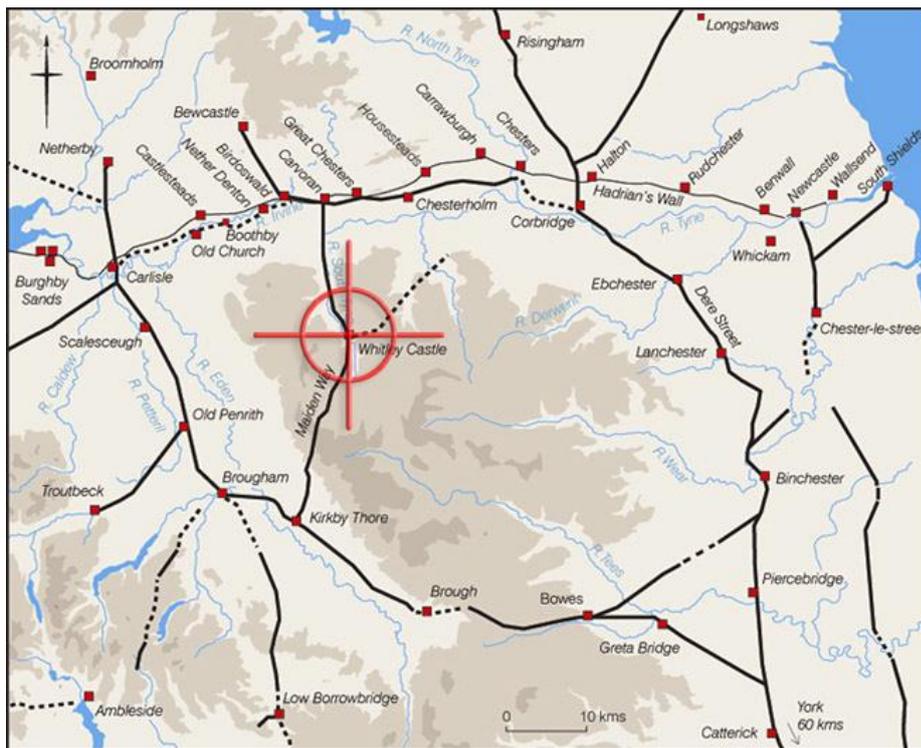


Fig: 1. Location Map: Whitley Castle Roman Fort (*Epiacum*) (after Went and Ainsworth, 2009) and the northern Roman Frontier.

1.3 Between Nov. 2007 and July 2008 the Archaeological Survey Team of what was then English Heritage (now Historic England) completed the first detailed archaeological landscape survey of Whitley Castle (Went and Ainsworth, 2009) and in 2009, the University of Durham carried out a geophysics survey of part of the site (Hale, 2009).

1.4 Extra mural settlement has been recorded to the west and north of the fort and an area to the south west has been tentatively identified as a possible parade ground or military wagon park

1.5 Post-Roman activity is visible in the form of medieval cultivation patterns, minor medieval settlement remains that overlie the fort defences, and two bastle houses and a C.18th farmhouse, Castle Nook, located within the fort itself.

2. TEST PITTING PROGRAMME

2.1 A programme of archaeological test pitting (out-with the area of the Scheduled Monument) was carried out by Dr. Rob Young for *Epiacum* Heritage Ltd. (EHL). This is a not-for-profit company set up to develop opportunities to promote the site, to increase public access and enjoyment, and to foster academic research work on all aspects of the history and archaeology of *Epiacum*.

2.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE TEST PITTING PROGRAMME

2.2.1 The English Heritage survey, noted above, demonstrated that the landscape context of the fort exhibited great time depth and that the landscape today is a palimpsest that needs to be unpicked to understand it fully. The Test Pitting Programme had 5 major aims and objectives:

- i) To train members of the local community in archaeological techniques involving excavation, recording, archaeological drawing and basic surveying and to characterize the extent, condition, date range and sequence of construction represented by surface and sub-surface (structural) archaeological remains.
- ii) To foster better public and academic understanding the time depth inherent in the archaeological landscape around the fort and to further EHL's aim of promoting better public access to, and enjoyment of, the site.
- iii) To use the information gathered to develop a more detailed archaeological programme of research that will be informed and guided by the recommendations for future research contained in the Regional Archaeological Research Framework 'Shared Visions' and which will feed into the sites own Archaeological Research Agenda (in prep.).
- iv) To set the results of the test pitting exercise within the context of the detailed topographical and historical survey of the site produced by Went and Ainsworth (2009)
- v) To use the data generated by the project to improve EHL's quantitative and qualitative knowledge of the above and below surface archaeological features in and around the Roman Fort, allowing improved management and curation policies for the site to be developed.

2.3 LOCATION OF TEST PITS – (FIGS. 2 – 5).

2.3.1 A series of test pits was laid out as indicated in Figs. 3 - 5. Eight were located to the north-east of the Holymire settlement (1-7, 11), three within the area of the so called 'parade ground' (8-10) and eight in the area to the south-east of Holymire, in an area of

what was originally thought to be medieval/post-medieval enclosures lying just outside the area surveyed by the English Heritage team, but visible on the LIDAR data for the site (13-20). Subsequent work by English Heritage and recent analysis of available LIDAR data by Stewart Ainsworth would now suggest that these enclosures may be Roman in date, as they seem to respect the layout of the paraded ground/waggon park boundary. A section was also excavated across the boundary of the 'parade ground' (12).

2.3.4 Test pit 5 was laid out to sample the geophysical anomaly identified in the Durham University geophysics survey (see Went and Ainsworth, 2009, Fig 47 – detail below Fig. 2).



Fig. 2: Detail of Magnetometer survey NE of Holymire (Went and Ainsworth, 2009, Fig. 47). (Geophys. Survey Data ©Archaeological Services Durham University).

2.3.5 The magnetometer survey to the north east of Holymire indicates the presence of fragmentary ditched enclosures, possibly aligned with the Maiden Way. In their original report Went and Ainsworth felt that 'these may be no more than by-products of the intersection of the road with the medieval cultivation pattern and the up-cast from a seasonal drainage channel.

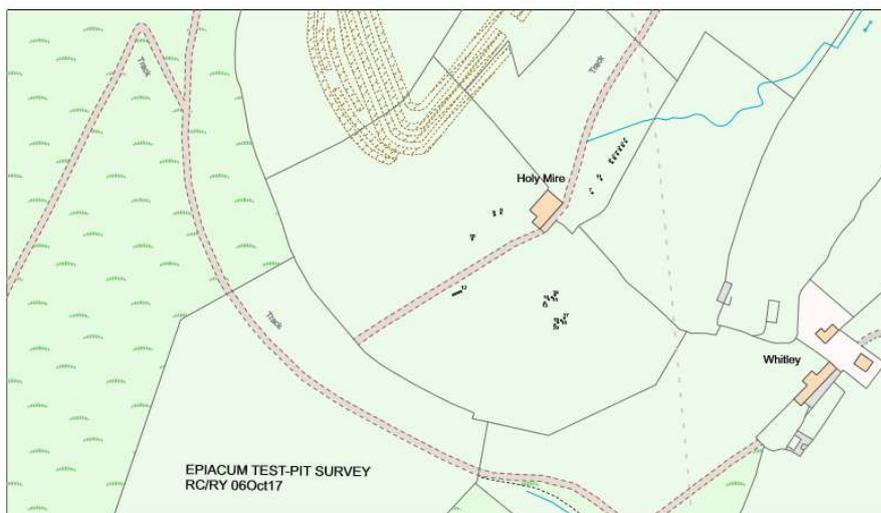


Fig. 3: Overview of Epiacum Test Pit Location. (Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database right 2017)

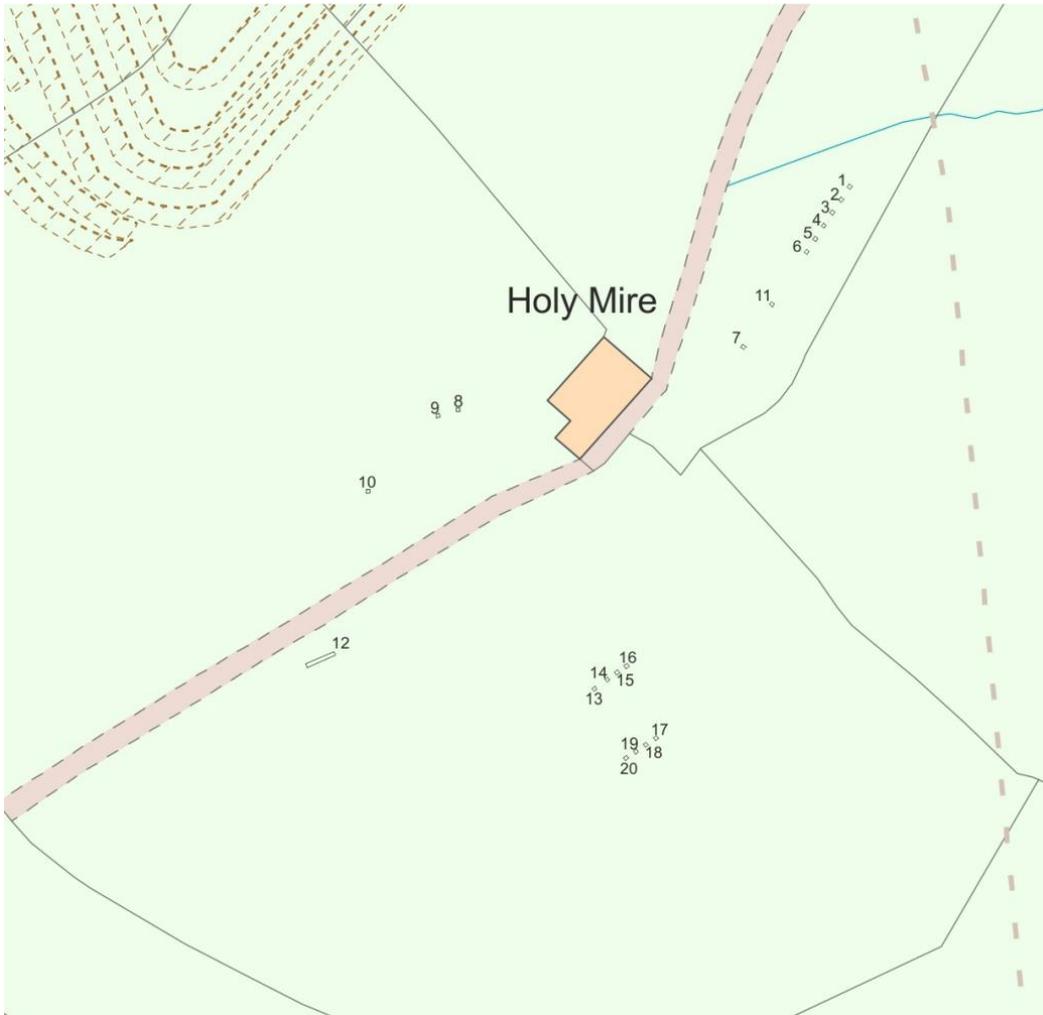


Fig 4: Detailed View of Epiacum Test Pit Location. (Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database right 2017)



Fig. 5: Epiacum Test pit locations superimposed on LIDAR and Geophysics Survey results. Source LIDAR data © North Pennines AONB Partnership; geophysical survey data © Archaeological Services Durham University.



Pl. 1: General view of location of test pits around Holymire.

2.3.6 All test pits, and the section (TP 12), were hand excavated and soil and stone was kept separate. All archaeological features were recorded in accordance with the Museum of London Recording Manual. Each test pit was recorded by the individuals working on it in a dedicated Test Pit Recording Booklet. These have been developed by the Archaeology Section of the School of History and Archaeology at Newcastle University. Plans were drawn in the test pit recording booklets at 1:20 and sections were recorded on separate drawings at 1:10. A high resolution, colour, digital, photographic record of all contexts was made and each photograph included a clearly visible, graduated, metric scale. Photographs have been included in this report as a record of excavated contexts. The plans and the test pit recording booklets, along with the section drawings, are part of the overall site archive. The finds from the test pitting exercise and the other elements of the site record are lodged with Epiacum Heritage Ltd.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 Any exercise like the one undertaken at Epiacum can only, by its very nature, provide a 'snapshot' of the archaeological potential of the study area. As the catalogue of test pit results, below, indicates there is, as one would expect in terms of archaeological finds, a fair representation of post-medieval/nineteenth century/modern material (including various ceramic forms, burnt animal bone, coal, cinder and modern window glass) in the spread of recovered artefacts. These tend to concentrate in the series of pits (1-7 and 11) located down slope from the Holymire settlement in an area with evidence for ridge and furrow ploughing and which was clearly under active agricultural usage during the lifetime of the settlement.

3.2 At the heart of the Holymire settlement would seem to be a bastle which may be of 16/17th century origin, but the house was certainly occupied during the 18th and 19th centuries when the original bastle seems to have been heightened and lengthened to the north-west, to form a long range, consisting of a house and barn (Ryder, 1995, 118). It is still depicted as a dwelling on the 1862 Enclosure Award Map. It has, subsequently, remained as

a barn with the addition, in the 1960s, of a large byre on the north side (Went and Ainsworth, 2009, 64).

3.3 The presence of post medieval material in the test pits to the north-east of the site can be accounted for as the results of midden dispersal/manuring over agricultural land. This material is discussed under each test pit heading.

3.4 It should also be noted here that the work in Test Pits 8, 9 and 10 have confirmed the results of the two test pits originally excavated in the 'Parade Ground' area by Stewart Ainsworth and Richard Carlton as part of their project based on the native settlement at Gilderdale (see Ainsworth and Carlton in prep. 'Excavations at a Roman Iron Age Settlement at Gilderdale Burn, Northumberland').

SELECTED FINDS

3.5. Flint

3.5.1 Flint was recovered from Test Pits 11 and 12 . The piece from Pit 11 was an irregularly shattered and ? burnt flint chunk , however the piece recorded from Test Pit 12 (the section across the 'Parade Ground') was a carefully worked blade, of probable Mesolithic date. This piece came from the very bottom of the ditch and was probably derived from earlier activity on the site before the ditch's construction. It is an inner removal from a core, in light brown flint. It has a plain butt, a small, pronounced bulb and the bulbar end is abraded on the dorsal surface. The piece also exhibits a hinge fracture at its distal end. The edges are sharp and fresh, with regular blade scars from previous removals, visible on the dorsal face. Such blades are common in later Mesolithic flint assemblages from the North Pennines.

3.6 Prehistoric Pottery

3.6.1 Test pit 19 produced one abraded sherd of, possible, Bronze Age pottery. This is highly oxidised and exhibits finger nail impressed decoration on one surface (**PI. 85**).

3.7 Roman Pottery

3.7.1 Roman material was recovered from Test Pits 1, 2, 4, 5, 11, 12, 13 and 15.

3.7.2 Test pit 1 produced a fragment from a highly oxidised red earthe ware flagon or jug which exhibits incised banding on its outer surface. This is a common Roman form.

3.7.3 More readily dated are the fragments of Nene Valley Colour coated ware vessels recovered from Pits 2, 4, 13 and 15. These all exhibit smooth textured white/off-white fabrics with abundant quartz sand visible within the vessel body and a grey slip. The two sherds from Pit 2 exhibit barbotine decoration, probably the remains of an animal scene, reminiscent of the well known 'hunt cup' design. This form of ceramic was common in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD and the production centre was located at the site of Water Newton in Northants.

3.7.4 Roman 'Grey Ware' pottery was discovered in pits 5 and 13. The material from Pit 5 is of particular interest here as it probably comes from the fill of one of the ditches recorded in the Durham University magnetometer survey noted above. In addition to the grey ware Context 3 in this pit also produced 7 sherds (including 2 conjoining base fragments and one body sherd which may join the base) from a Black Burnished 2 Ware jar. One body sherd exhibits the classic lattice decoration of this vessel form. The vessel is thin walled, very well fired and wheel thrown. It has a fine sandy fabric with some quartz inclusions and probably dates to the 2nd or 3rd centuries AD.

3.7.5 Other possible Roman material comes in the form of a piece of vessel glass from Context 2 in Test Pit 2 and a single sherd of hard fired, black pottery from Context 3 in Test pit 11. The section across the 'Parade Ground' rampart also produced four fragments of fired clay that would appear to be daub, possibly from a wattle and daub wall. Three pieces have clear evidence for the marks of timber wattles.

3.8 Industrial Residues

3.8.1 The residues from possible industrial activities at Epiacum are represented by highly fired, vitreous, slag-like material, recovered from Test Pits 10, 14, 16 and 18. Further chemical analysis would be necessary to indicate the range of potential processes that these pieces were derived from.

3.9 Clay Tobacco Pipes

3.9.1 Clay tobacco pipe fragments were recorded in Pits 6 and 11. The fragment from Pit 6 is a largely un-diagnostic, thick, piece of pipe stem. The material from Test Pit 11 which consists of a pipe bowl and two small stem fragments is potentially of 18th century date. The bowl is upright and rather narrow, with thick walls and stem and some milling or rouletting around the external mouth of the bowl. This may date to the period 1700 – 1740 (Oswald, 1975, 207).

4. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

4.1 The test pitting programme had five major aims, all of which have been realised. The work clearly had a high element of community involvement and participants all received training in excavation, surveying and recording techniques. All participants in the programme also gained a better understanding of the complex nature of the Epiacum landscape and its inherent 'time depth'. All those involved also seemed to have enjoyed the whole experience.

4.2 Although restricted in overall scale, the work has highlighted the potential for future, targeted, community-based but professionally led, archaeological work at Epiacum. In particular, it has questioned the initial assumptions about the dating of the features identified in the geophysics survey, in the area to the north-east of Holymire, and it has suggested that further, potentially larger-scale, excavations in this location, out-with the scheduled monument, might prove rewarding in the future. Further work should also be carried out in the area of what are now thought to be Roman enclosures to the south-east of Holymire in the area of Test Pits 13 -20.

4.3 Of particular importance here is the work relating to the 'Parade Ground/Waggon Park' at the site. Initially identified by Ainsworth, this feature has now been subject to 5 test pits and one substantial section across its perimeter bank. While this work cannot confirm or deny its actual function, it does seem that considerable effort was expended upon its construction. The pattern of constructing the feature's surface – flat sandstone slabs laid on and into the cleared natural clay – is well attested in 3 of the 5 excavated test pits. The perimeter bank and external ditch is also, clearly, well executed and it would appear that the ground surface was, again, cleared before construction work began.

4.4 The overall results of the test pitting exercise have provided data that will help inform the knowledge base of the developing *Epiacum Archaeological Research Agenda*. In addition, the information on localised stratigraphy will also be useful in terms of informing future land-use, conservation and management activities in the area of the farm, outwith the scheduled area of the fort and its environs.

TEST PIT CATALOGUE

Test Pit 1

Turf (1) was removed to a depth of 190mm onto (2), a dark brown clay silt with charcoal flecking. (2), was removed down to a max. depth of 290mm onto (3), an orange/grey/brown mottled sandy clay with rounded and angular sandstone fragments. (3), was, in turn, removed to a varying depth of 280mm – 200mm across the pit onto (4), a dark grey/brown clay. (**Fig. 6; Pls. 2 - 4**).



Pl. 2: Test Pit 1: Top of (2).



Pl. 3: Test Pit 1: Top of (3).



Pl. 4: Test Pit 1: Top of (4) Natural.

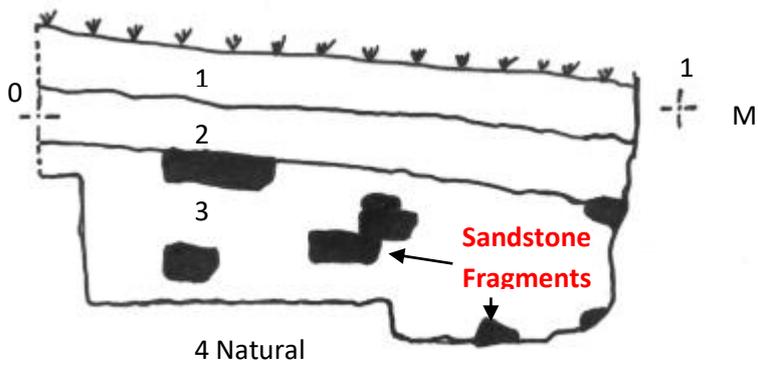


Fig. 6: South Facing Section: Test Pit 1.

Finds: (Pls. 5 – 7)

Context 2:

Pl. 5

- i) 3 sherds from a transfer printed red,? willow pattern vessel (cup). Total Weight: 2gms. ? Nineteenth century date.
- ii) 2 indeterminate sherds of highly fired white ware. Total weight: Les than 1gm.? Nineteenth century date.
- iii) 1 sherd black and white transfer ware - foot-ring from base of dish or bowl. Total Weight: 4gms. ? Nineteenth century date.
- iv) Small piece of coal.

Context 3

Pl. 6

- i) Heavily abraded red earthen ware sherd from neck of flagon or jug. Exhibits incised banding on outer surface. Total weight: 2gms. ? Roman.

Pl. 7

- i) 2 pieces of coal.



Pl. 5: Post-Medieval pottery and coal – Context 2.



Pl. 6: Roman Pottery – Context 3.



Pl. 7: Coal – Context 4.

Test Pit 2

Turf (1) was removed to a maximum depth of 150mm onto (2), a mid-brown sandy clay with charcoal flecking. (2), was removed to a varying depth of 250-170mm across the pit onto (3), a grey/mottled sandy clay with irregular sandstone fragments. (3), was removed to a varying depth of 360 – 260mm across the pit onto (4), the natural grey-brown clay. (**Fig. 7; Pls. 8 - 10**).



Pl. 8: Test Pit 2: Top of (2).



Pl. 9: Test Pit 2: Top of (3).



Pl. 10: Test Pit 2: Top of (4).

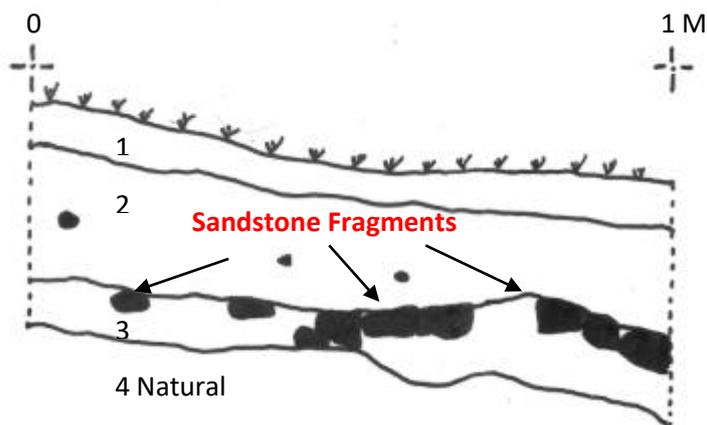


Fig. 7: South-East Facing Section: Test Pit 2.

Finds: (Pls. 11 – 12)

Context 2

Pl. 11

- i) Small triangular sherd from ? transfer printed willow pattern Vessel. Total weight: less than 1gm. ? Nineteenth century date.
- ii) 1 sherd from crackled and crazed white ware vessel. Total weight: less than 1gm. ? Nineteenth century date.
- iii) Thin sherd from highly fired indeterminate vessel. Pink/brown outer surface, white glazed inner surface hard white core. Total weight: Less than 1gm. ? Nineteenth century date.

iv) 1 small sherd from black glazed vessel with grey core. Total weight: less than 1 gm. ?
Nineteenth century date.

v) 1 small rim sherd from brown glazed earthen ware plate. Total weight: Less than 1 gm. ?
Nineteenth century date.

vi) 1 sherd of blue/green glass from thick walled vessel. Bubbles visible on interior Abraded.
Total weight: 2gms. Possibly Roman.

Context 3

Pl. 12

i) 2 sherds from ? Nene Valley (Northants.) Colour Coated Ware Beaker – ‘Hunt Cup’.
Decorated ‘en barbotine’ with details from a hunting scene? The pieces exhibit the remains of
the leg and possibly tail from an animal. Hard, smooth-textured, white to off-white fabric with
abundant, very fine, quartz sand visible at x20. Grey (but abraded) slip. Total weight: 3gms.
Roman ? C. 2nd -3rd AD.



Pl. 11: Post Medieval pottery and possible Roman Glass - Context 2.



Pl. 12: Two sherds Roman Colour Coated Ware – Context 3.

Test Pit 3

Turf (1) was removed to a maximum depth of 180mm across the pit onto (2), a dark brown, silty, clay. This was removed to a maximum depth of 260mm onto (3), a dark brown, silty, clay, with more clay present than (2) and some angular and rounded sandstone visible. This was removed to a maximum depth of 370mm onto (4), a grey, mottled, clay with some sandstone fragments. This, in turn, was removed to a maximum depth of 4-5mm onto the natural sub-soil (5) a golden yellow sandy clay with rounded and angular sandstone fragments. (**Fig. 8; Pls: 13 - 16**).



Pl. 13: Test Pit 3: Top of (2).



Pl. 14: Test Pit 3: Top of (3).



Pl. 15: Test Pit 3: Top of (4).



Pl. 16: Test Pit 3: Top of (5) (Natural).

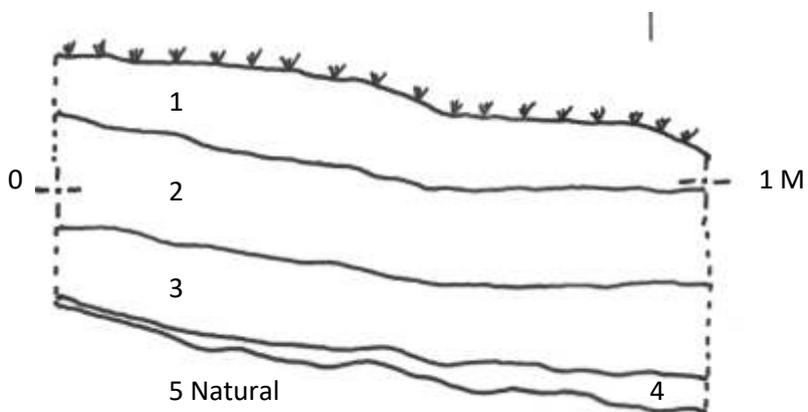


Fig. 8: South Facing Section: Test Pit 3.

Finds: (Pls: 17 – 18)

Context 1 (Turf)

Pl. 17:

- i) 2 sherds of modern ? window glass. Total weight: 2gms.

Context 2

Pl. 18:

- i) 12 pieces of coal.



Pl. 17: Two sherds modern window glass – Context 1.



Pl. 18: 12 pieces of coal – Context 2.

Test Pit 4

Turf (1) was removed to a depth of 120-150mm across the pit onto (2), a dark brown clay/silt. (2) was removed to a depth of 100-120mm onto (3), a mottled orange/grey clay silt with some charcoal flecking and small rounded fragments of stone (less than 5%) over (4) a mid-brown silty clay with less than 2% charcoal flecking present. This was c. 120-100mm thick and overlay (5), natural, flat, abraded and eroded, sandstone slabs in a matrix of golden - yellow sandy clay. (**Fig.9; Pls. 19 - 22**).



Pl. 19: Test Pit 4: Top of (2).



Pl. 20: Test Pit 4: Top of (3).



Pl. 21: Test Pit 4: Top of (4) .



Pl. 22: Test Pit 4: Top of (5) (Natural).

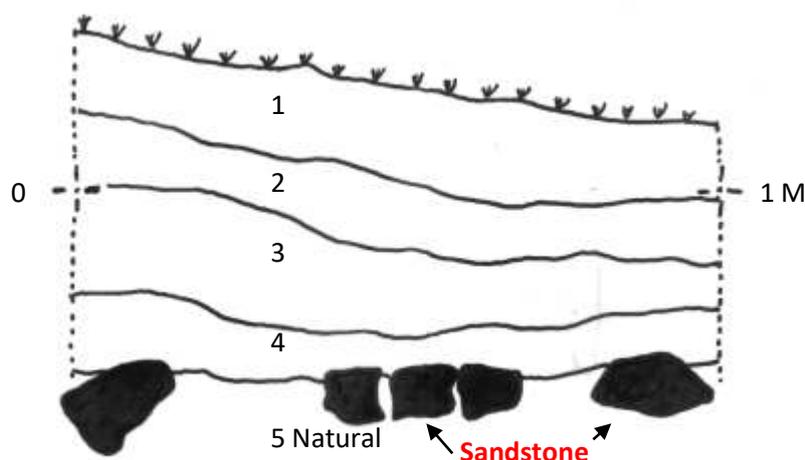


Fig. 9: South Facing Section: Test Pit 4.

Finds: (Pls. 23 – 24)

Context 2

Pl. 23

- i) 2 conjoining sherds from the base of an, internally, black glazed, earthen ware, cup or bowl. Very fine, hard fired, oxidised orange/red fabric. Very scratched on interior ? through use. Base diam.: 7 cms. Total Weight: 7 gms. ? Nineteenth century date.
- ii) 1 sherd from mottled brow/cream glazed earthenware vessel ? plate. Glazed on both surfaces. Hard-fired, oxidised, red/orange, fabric. Total weight: 1gm. ? Nineteenth century date.
- iii) 1 small sherd, hard fired white ware, white, vitreous, glaze on both surfaces. Total weight: less than 1gm. ? Nineteenth century date.
- iv) 1 body sherd from cup/bowl. Hard-fired, white, fabric with a highly vitrified, black/grey, glaze on both surfaces. Total weight: 1gm. ? Nineteenth century date.
- v) 3 fragments of ? burnt animal bone.
- vi) 3 fragments of coal
- vii) 1 body sherd from Colour Coated Ware Beaker. Abraded, hard, smooth-textured, white to off-white fabric, with abundant, very fine, quartzsand visible at x20. Grey, but abraded, slip. c.f. Test Pit 2 Context 3, Pl. 12 above. Total weight: 2gms.

Context 3

Pl. 24

- i) 1 body sherd from mottled brown glazed, earthenware, vessel ? plate. Glazed on one surface only. Very fine, hard fired, red/orange oxidised fabric. Total weight: less than 1gm. ? Nineteenth century date.

ii) 1 fragment of coal

iii) 2 fragments of cinder ? from domestic fire.



PI. 23: Post-Medieval and Roman pottery, bone and coal – Context 2.



PI. 24 Post-Medieval pottery, cinder and coal – Context 3.

Test Pit 5

Turf (1) was removed to a maximum depth of 160mm across the pit onto (2), a brown clay-silt some 150-100mm thick. (2) was removed onto (3), a coarse, mid-brown sandy clay with some small, angular and rounded sandstone fragments, 190mm – 15mm thick. This, in turn, overlay (4), a 150-160mm thick, coarse, medium brown/orange sand, over the natural sandstone base (5). (**Fig. 10; Pls. 25 - 27**).



Pl. 25: Test Pit 5: Top of (2).



Pl. 26: Test Pit 5: Top of (3).



Pl. 27: Test Pit 5: Top of (5) Natural with (4) removed.

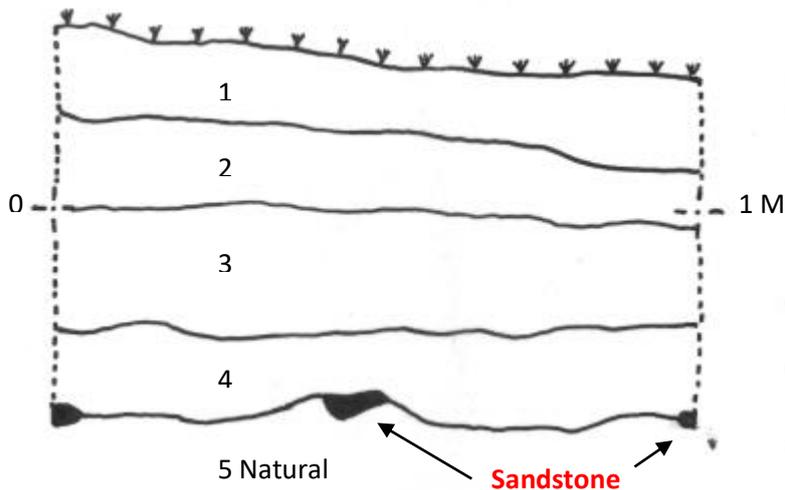


Fig. 10: South Facing Section: Test Pit 5.

Finds: Pls. 28 - 29

Context 2

Pl. 28

- 1) 2 conjoining sherds from a brown glazed, earthenware, vessel. Glazed on both surfaces. Very fine, hard fired, orange/red oxidised fabric. Total weight: 3gms. ? Nineteenth century date.
- ii) 1 small fragment of irregularly fired clay. Oxidised, red/orange colour. Total weight: 1gm.
- iii) 1 fragment of ? worked shale. Total weight: 2gms.
- iv) 2 small fragments of white glazed White Ware. Total weight: less than 1gm. ? Nineteenth century date.

v) 2 large fragments of calcined, white, animal bone. Total weight: 11gms

vi) 1 fragment of coal.

Context 3

Pl. 29

i) 4 abraded, and slightly rounded, body sherds, including 1 possible base fragment from a light grey coarse ware ? jar. Fine, laminar, fabric with small, light grey, crushed grits and rounded and angular quartz fragments Total Weight: 16 gms. Roman.

ii) 7 sherds including 2 conjoining base sherds and 1 body sherd (which may join the bases) from a ? Black Burnished 2 Ware jar. One body sherd exhibits the classic 'lattice' decoration of this type of vessel. Thin walled, ? wheel thrown and very well fired. Fine, sandy, fabric with some quartz inclusions. Total weight: 28gms. Roman ? 2nd-3rd Century date.

iii) 1 large ? cinder fragment. Very light. Total weight: 5gms

iv) 5 small fragments of coal and charcoal. Total weight: Less than 1gm.

v) 2 fragments of ? burnt animal bone . Total weight: Less than 1gm.



Pl. 28: Post-Medieval pottery, ? worked shale, fired clay, burnt bone and coal – Context 2.



Pl. 29: Roman coarse ware (grey), Black Burnished 2 Ware , cinder, coal/charcoal, burnt bone – Context 3.

Test Pit 6

Turf (1) was removed to a maximum depth of 90mm, onto (2), a dark brown clay/silt some 140mm thick with a small (less than 2%) stone component and 10% charcoal flecking. This overlay (3), a clean, 100mm thick, mottled, orange/brown silty clay which was removed onto (4), a pale, yellow/grey sandy clay with small/medium sandstone content and some charcoal flecking. (4) was 50 – 110mm thick and overlay (5) a pale yellow sandy clay some 4-8mm thick, which in turn overlay (6), natural, eroded sandstone fragments in a mottled golden yellow clay matrix. (**Fig. 11; Pls. 30 - 33**)



Pl. 30: Test Pit 6: Top of (2).



Pl. 31: Test Pit 6: Top of (3).



Pl. 32: Test Pit 6: Top of (4).



Pl. 33: Test Pit 6: Top of (5).

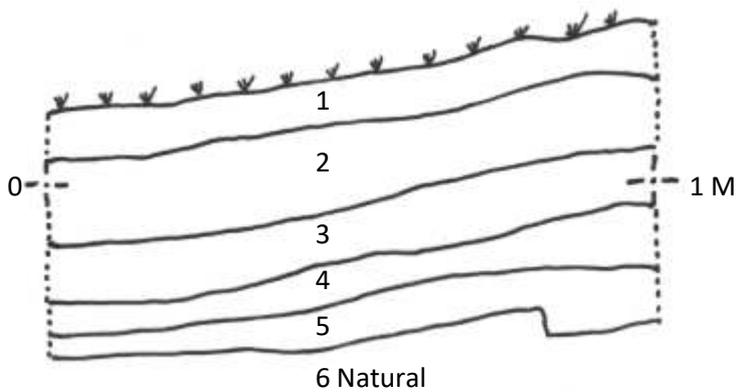


Fig. 11: South Facing Section: Test Pit 6.

Finds: Pl. 34

Context 2

Pl. 34

- i) 19 fragments of ? burnt animal bone. Total weight: 12gms.
- ii) 3 pieces of fired clay. Total weight: 4gms.
- iii) 1 stem fragment from thick, white, clay pipe. Total weight: 3gms.
- iv) 4 fragments White Ware. Total weight: 2gms. ? Nineteenth century/Modern date.
- v) 1 small fragment pale green glass. Total weight: less than 1gm.
- vi) 1 abraded sherd of Shell Edged Pearl Ware ? from plate. Total weight: 1gm. Late eighteenth/Nineteenth century date.
- vii) 1 abraded fragment from a sponge ware-decorated ? soup plate. Total weight: 1gm. ? Late Eighteenth/Nineteenth century date.
- viii) 1 abraded sherd from a brown sponge ware decorated plate. Total weight: 3gms. ? Nineteenth century date.
- ix) 1 abraded sherd from a hard fired, transfer printed vessel. White fabric core. Total weight: less than 1 gm. ? Nineteenth century date.
- x) 1 sherd of white and blue glazed, earthenware, vessel. Total weight: less than 1gm. ? Nineteenth century date.
- xi) 1 abraded sherd of hard fired dark/light blue glazed vessel. White core. Total weight: less than 1 gm. ? Nineteenth century date.
- xii) 1 abraded sherd from mottled brown glazed vessel. Total weight: less than 1gm. ? Nineteenth century date.
- xiii) 1 very small fragment of ? salt-glazed vessel. Total weight: less than 1 gm. ? Nineteenth century date.
- xiv) 1 sherd from light brown slip ware decorated earthenware bowl. Total weight: 6gms. ? Late Eighteenth/Nineteenth century date.
- xv) 5 fragments of coal.



PI. 34: Burnt bone, fired clay, clay pipe, white ware, glass, shell edged pearlware, sponge ware, glazed earthenware, slip ware, coal – Context 2.

Test Pit 7

Turf (1) was removed to a maximum depth of 90mm onto (2), a dark brown silty/sandy clay some 150-180mm thick. This in turn overlay (3), a layer of small, rounded, and angular sandstone cobbles with some igneous rock present. This was set in (4), a dark brown silty clay which overlay (5), another angular sandstone layer set in a dark brown sandy clay. This was removed onto (6), a tight arrangement of angular stones ? bed rock with a mid-brown sand matrix. It was assumed that this was the natural sub-surface and excavation finished at this level c. 400mm from the pit surface. **(Fig. 12; Pls. 35 – 41).**



Pl. 35: Test Pit 7: Top of (2).



Pl. 36: Test Pit 7 (3) in process of recording.



Pl. 37: Test Pit 7: Top of (3).



Pl. 38: Test Pit 7: (4) over (5).



Pl. 39: Test Pit 7: (5) fully exposed.



Pl. 40: Test Pit 7: (5) in process of removal.



Pl. 41: Test Pit 7: (6) ? natural – Limit of excavation.

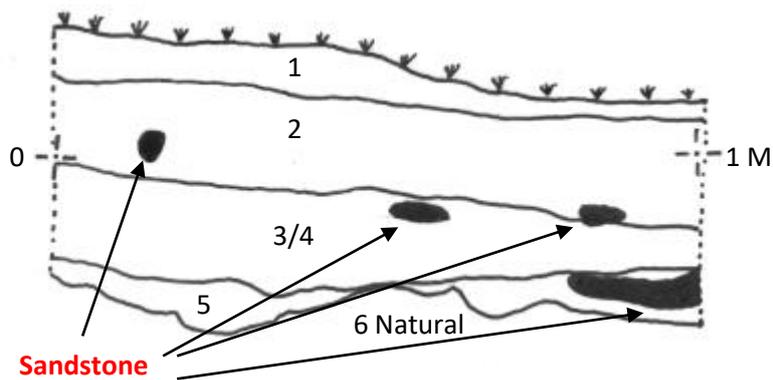


Fig. 12: South Facing Section: Test Pit 7

Finds: Pl. 42

Context 2:

Pl. 42

- i) 1 abraded sherd, thick, white, earthen ware with fawn-brown and green glaze. Total weight: 1gm. ? Nineteenth century date.
- ii) 1 abraded sherd White Ware with dark brown/purple glaze. Total weight: less than 1 gm. ? Nineteenth century date.
- iii) 1 abraded black ceramic sherd. Total weight: less than 1 gm.



PI. 42 Post-Medieval pottery – Context 2.

Test Pit 8 'Parade Ground'

Turf (1) was removed to a max depth of 170mm onto (2), an orange/brown clay silt soil. Two large stones were set into this subsoil. These may have been the remains of the parade ground surface in this pit. These were removed down onto a mottled grey/yellow, sandy, clay, natural surface (3). (**Fig. 13; Pls. 43 - 45**).



Pl. 43 :Test Pit 8: Initial troweling after turf removal.



Pl. 44: Test Pit 8: Top of (2).



Pl. 45: Test Pit 8: (2) removed onto natural (3).

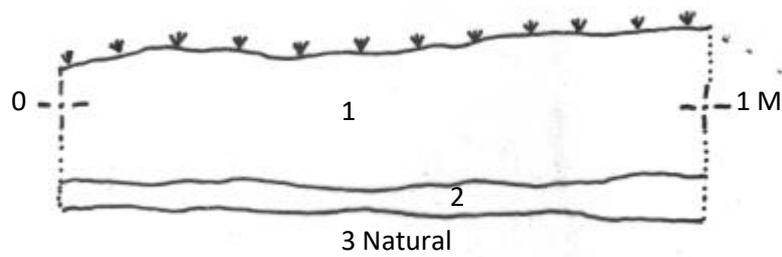


Fig. 13: North Facing Section: Test Pit 8.

Finds: No archaeological finds recorded

Test Pit 9 'Parade Ground'

Turf (1) was removed to a maximum depth of 160mm onto (2), an orange/brown, sandy, clay, soil with sandstone slabs and chunks. This may have been the remains of the parade ground surface in this test pit. (2), was removed down onto a mottled grey/yellow sandy clay (3). (Fig. 14; Pls. 46 - 48).



Pl. 46: Test Pit 9: Initial troweling over (2).



Pl. 47: Test Pit 9: (2) exposed.



PI. 48: Test Pit 9: (2) removed onto natural surface (3).

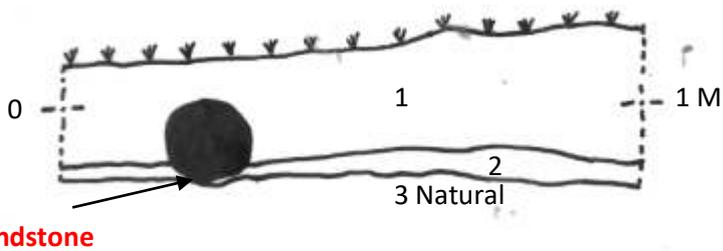


Fig. 14: North Facing Section: Test Pit 9.

Finds: No archaeological finds recorded.

Test Pit 10 'Parade Ground'

Turf (1) was removed to a depth of 140mm across the test pit to reveal a well-formed surface of sandstone slabs, immediately beneath the turf layer (2). The stones were lifted and were clearly set in a mottled-grey/orange, sandy, clay, natural subsoil. After recording the lifted slabs were replaced. (Fig. 15; Pls. 49 - 51).



Pl. 49: Test Pit 10: Initial Turf removal.



Pl. 50: Test Pit 10: 'Parade Ground' surface slabs revealed after removal of turf.



PI. 51 : Test Pit 10: Slabs removed onto natural clay surface

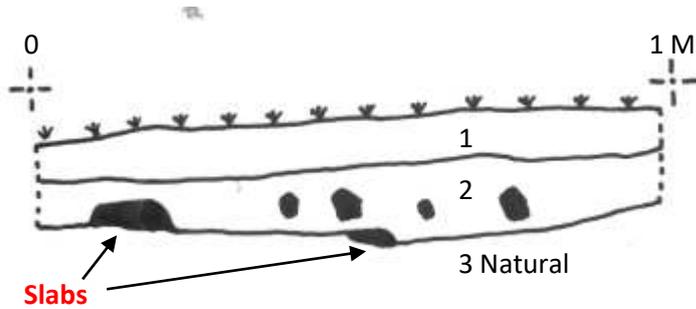


Fig. 15: North Facing Section: Test Pit 10

Finds: PI. 52

Context 2

PI. 52

i) 1 fragment green/grey, highly vitrified, slag. Total weight: less than 1 gm.



PI. 52: 1 Fragment of slag – Context 2.

Test Pit 11

Turf (1) was removed to a maximum depth of 210mm across the test pit to reveal (2), a dark brown, silty, clay, soil layer with 1 sandstone rock present. Context (2) was removed down onto (3), an irregular spread of sandstone, slab-like, rocks, set in a mid brown clay/silt some 150mm thick. This in turn overlay (4) (Fig. 16; Pls. 53 – 54).



Pl. 53: Test Pit 11: Top of (3).



Pl. 54: Test Pit 11: (4).

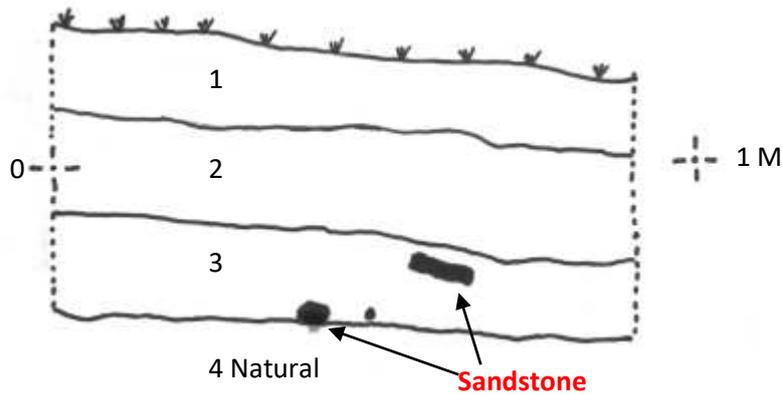


Fig. 16: South Facing Section : Test Pit 11.

Finds: Pls. 55 - 57

Context 2

Pls. 55 - 56

i) Irregularly shattered, white, ? calcined, flint chunk. Total weight: 1gm.



Pl. 55: Shattered ? calcined flint chunk – Context 2.

Pl. 56

i) 12 fragments of coal. Total weight: 38gms.

ii) Clay pipe. Upright bowl, rather narrow, varying from long to medium; thick walls and stem, Milling/rouletting around mouth of bowl. Total weight: 9gms. Date: c.1700-40. (Oswald,1975)

iii) 2 fragments from clay pipe stem. Total weight: Less than 1gm.



Pl. 56: Coal and clay pipe fragments – Context 2

Context 3

Pl. 57

i) 1 abraded sherd. Hard fired, fine, black fabric. Total weight: less than 1gm. ? Roman.



Pl. 57: Abraded sherd Roman pot – Context 3.

Test Pit 12: Section Across Parade Ground Boundary

A section measuring 8m x 1m was excavated across the 'Parade Ground' boundary bank and ditch. Before excavation this feature appeared as a low, smooth profiled, bank c. 4.80m wide and c. 38cms high, with an external ditch c. 80cms wide at the surface. Before excavation the ditch still held water.

Turf (1) was removed across the section to a maximum depth of 15cms onto (2), the bank material which consisted of a mottled, golden/yellow, sandy, clay with sandstone fragments and some larger, rounded, sandstone pieces. Within the ditch, removal of (1) revealed (3), a layer of dark brown, silty, sand of maximum thickness 13cms.

The bank material overlay natural subsoil (5) consisting of a mottled golden/yellow, sticky, clay with much broken sandstone present. No 'old land surface' was visible under the bank and this was probably removed prior to the construction of the bank and ditch. The bank material clearly derives from the excavation of the ditch.

Removal of (3) within the ditch revealed (4), a very fine, grey, sandy, clay silt – maximum thickness c. 29cms directly overlying the natural (5). (**Figs. 17 – 19; Pls. 58 – 61**).



Pl. 58: Test Pit 12: Turf Removal over bank and ditch.



Pl. 59: Test Pit 12: South Facing bank section from North.



Pl. 60: Test Pit 12: View along section through bank from East.



Pl. 61: Test Pit 12: South facing section of Parade Ground Ditch from North.



Pl. 62: Test Pit 12: View along bank and ditch section from west showing ditch filled with water.



Pl. 63: Test Pit 12: Detailed view of water filled ditch.



Pl. 64: Test Pit 12: General view along bank and ditch section from East.



Plan (a) Of Section Across Parade Ground Bank And Ditch With Turf Removed

Fig. 17: Plan A Test Pit 12: Parade Ground Bank and Ditch with Turf Removed

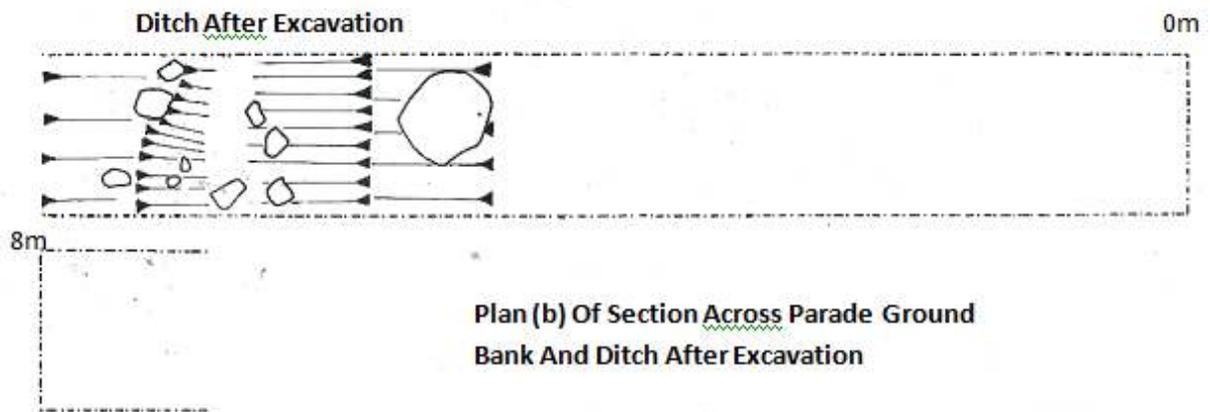


Fig. 18: Plan B Test Pit 12: Parade Ground Bank and Ditch After Excavation

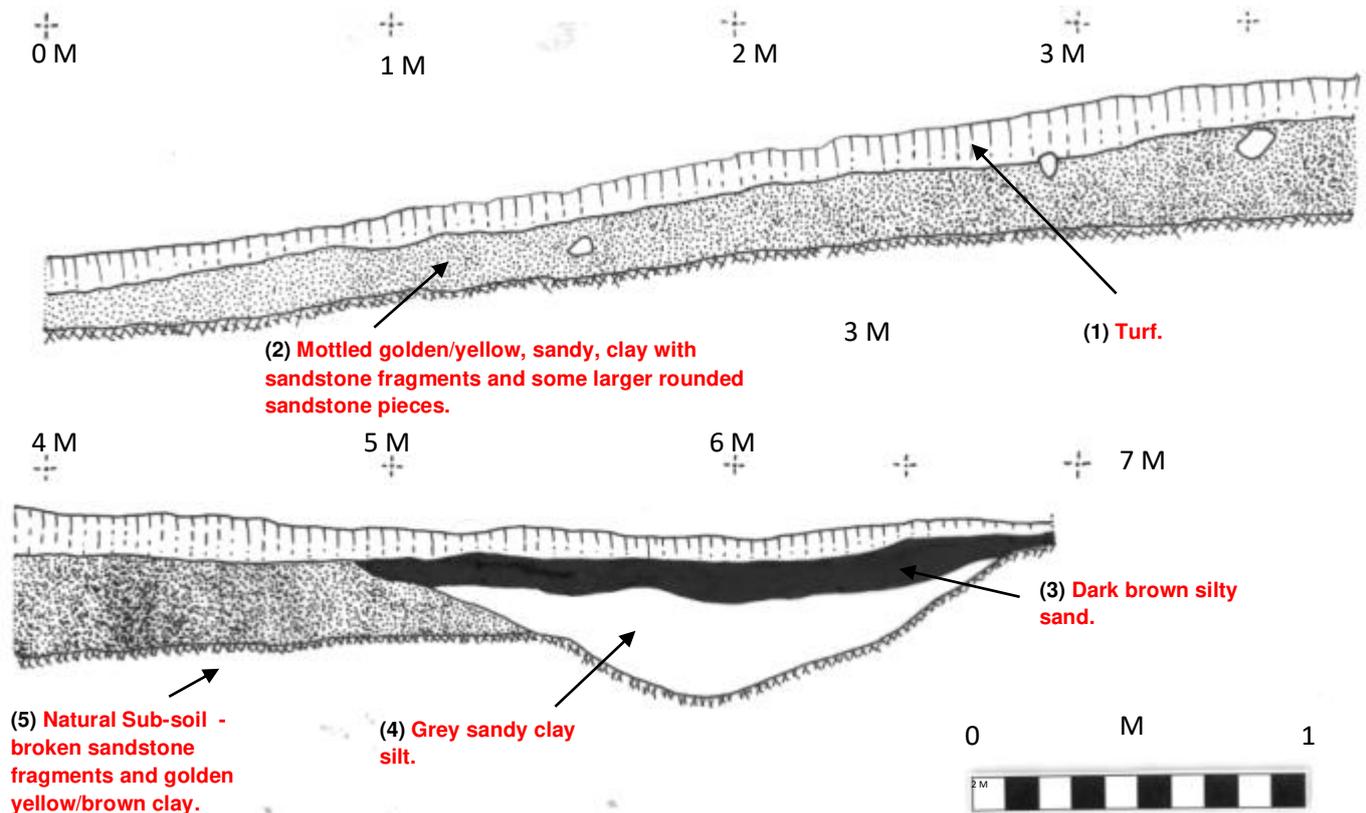


Fig. 19: North Facing Section through Parade Ground Bank and Ditch: Test Pit 12.

Finds: Pls. 65 – 66.

Context 2

Pl. 65

i) 4 fragments of fired clay. Probably daub ? from a wattle and daub wall. Grey outer surfaces and orange brown core. Three pieces show impressions from timber withies. Total weight: 39gms.



Pl. 65: Four fragments of fired clay/daub – Context 2.

Context 4

Pl. 66

i) Light brown inner flint blade. Plain butt, small, pronounced bulb. Bulbar end abraded. Hinge fracture at distal end. Edges sharp and fresh with regular blade scars visible on dorsal face. Max. dimensions: 32mm x 14mm x 3mm. Total weight: 1gms.

ii) Broken fragment of ? worked (rounded) shale. Total weight: Less than 1 gm.



Pl. 66: Light brown flint blade and worked shale fragment – Context 4.

Test Pit 13

Turf (1) was removed across the pit to a maximum depth of 300mm onto (2), a 180mm thick, dark brown, coarse, sandy clay with some rounded sandstone fragments. This in turn was removed onto (3), an orange/grey/ brown, silty, clay with angular sandstone fragments, some 6 mm thick. (3), was removed onto the natural sub-soil (4), which consisted of a grey/brown, sandy, silt over golden yellow sandstone bedrock. (**Fig. 20; Pls. 67 – 68**).



Pl. 67 : Test Pit 13: Top of (2).



Pl. 68: Test Pit 13: (3) overlying (4) top of natural.

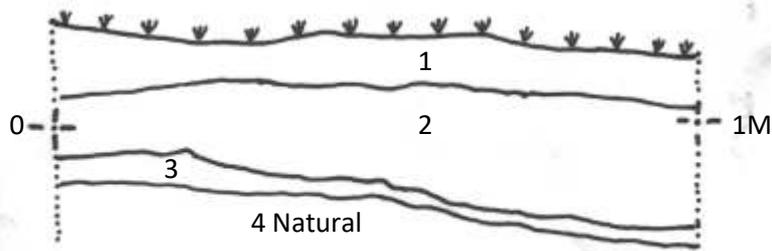


Fig. 20: South Facing Section: Test Pit 13.

Finds: Pl. 69

Context 2

Pl. 69

i) 1 abraded sherd from the neck of a coarse, Grey-Ware, jar/bowl. Grey outer and inner surfaces, with red/brown core. Total weight: 2 gms. Roman.

ii) 1 small abraded sherd from a Colour Coated Ware vessel. Total weight: Less than 1 gm. Roman.



Pl. 69: Two fragments of Roman pottery – Context 2.

Test Pit 14

Turf (1) was removed to a depth of 140mm across the trench onto (2), a dark brown, sandy, clay soil – maximum depth 120mm. (2) was removed onto (3), which consisted of rounded and angular sandstone fragments, in a dark brown, sandy, clay matrix of maximum thickness c. 150mm. This, in turn, overlay the natural golden/yellow sandstone bedrock (4), with some mid brown coarse grey sandy clay pockets. **(Fig. 21; Pls. 70 – 71).**



Pl. 70: Test Pit 14 Showing removal of (2) onto (3).



Pl. 71: Test Pit 14: removal of (3) onto (4).

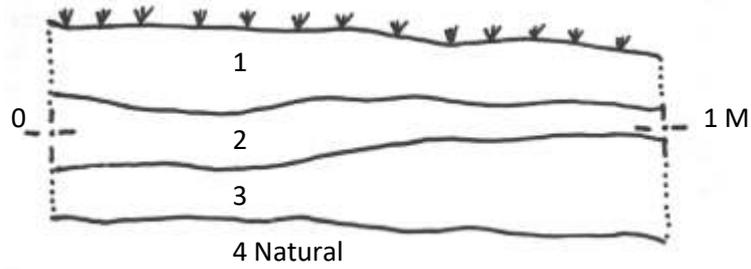


Fig. 21: South Facing Section: Test Pit 14.

Finds: Pl. 72

Context 2

Pl. 72

i) 1 fragment of green/brown, highly vitrified, slag-like material. Total weight: Less than 1 gm.



Pl. 72: Slag fragment – Context 2.

Test Pit 15

Turf (1) was removed to a maximum depth of 8mm onto (2), a coarse, dark brown, sandy, clay of maximum thickness c. 150mm, with some charcoal flecking. This, in turn, overlay (3), a grey/brown, silty, clay with rounded and angular sandstone fragments of maximum thickness 100mm. (3) was removed onto (4), the natural, hard packed, irregular, sandstone bedrock with some grey, sandy, clay admixture and many small charcoal flecks. (Fig. 22; Pls. 73 – 74).



Pl. 73: Test 15: (2) removed onto top of (3)



Pl. 74: Test Pit 15: Top of (4).

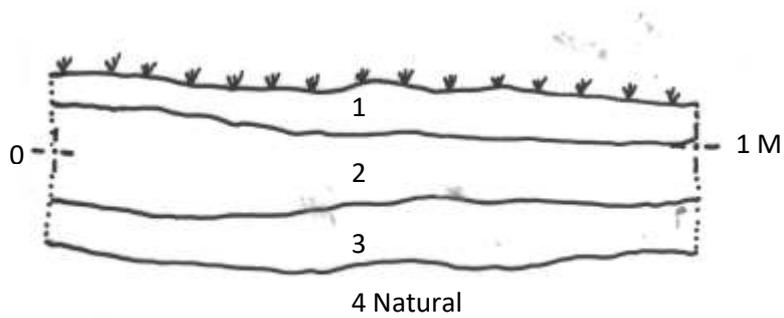


Fig. 22: South Facing Section: Test Pit 15.

Finds : Pl. 75

Context 2

Pl. 75

i) 1 abraded sherd from a Colour Coated War Beaker. Total weight: 2gms. Roman



Pl. 75: Roman Colour Coated Ware Beaker sherd – Context 2.

Test Pit 16

Turf (1) was removed to a maximum depth of 100mm onto (2), a dark brown, clay/sand, with some small stones and some charcoal flecking (less than 5%). Maximum thickness 150mm. (2) was removed onto (3), a further grey/brown sand layer with angular and rounded sandstone rocks – Maximum thickness 120mm. (3) was an uneven layer across the pit and was, in turn, removed down onto (4), the natural surface, which consists here of hard, golden yellow, sandstone bedrock with an associated thin layer of grey sandy soil. (**Fig. 23; Pls. 76 - 77**).



Pl. 76: Test Pit 16: (2) removed onto top of (3).



Pl. 77: Test Pit 16: Top of (4) natural.

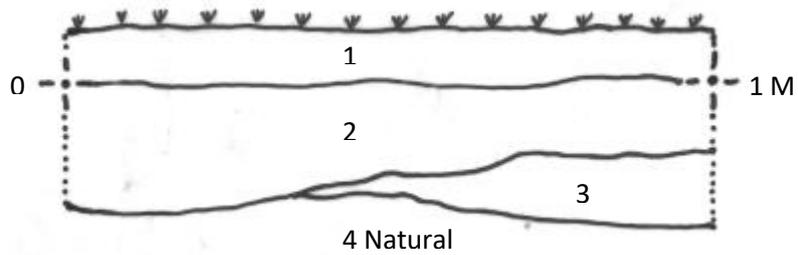


Fig. 23: South Facing Section: Test Pit 16.

Finds: Pl. 78

Context 2

Pl. 78

i) Light, but highly vitrified, purple/brown slag fragment. Surface is covered in small holes ? from bursting air bubbles. Total weight: 17gms.



Pl. 78: Heavily vitrified slag fragment – Context 2.

Test Pit 17

Turf (1) was removed to a maximum depth of 140 mm onto (2), a mid-brown, clay, silt with some angular sandstone fragments – Maximum thickness 120mm. (2) overlay the natural surface (3), which consisted here of a grey/brown, sandy, silt overlying golden/yellow sandstone bedrock at a maximum depth of 220mm. (Fig. 24; Pls. 79 – 80).



Pl. 79: Test Pit 17: Top of (2).



Pl. 80: Test Pit 17: Top of natural (3).

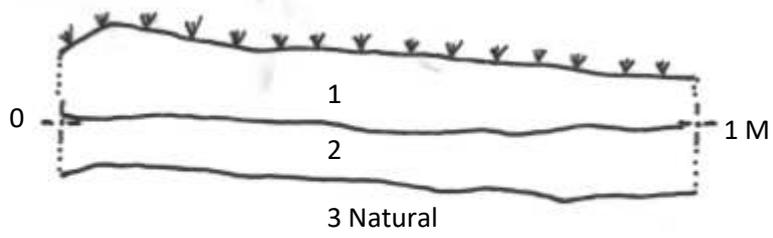


Fig. 24: South Facing Section: Test Pit 17.

Finds: No archaeological finds were recorded.

Test Pit 18

Turf (1) was removed to a maximum depth of 100mm across the pit to reveal (2), a mid brown, silty, clay - Mmaximum thickness 150mm, directly overlying (3), a grey/brown, sandy, silt over hard, golden/yellow bedrock. (Fig. 25; PLs. 81 – 82).



Pl. 81: Test Pit 18: Top of (2).



Pl. 82: Test Pit 18: Top of (3).

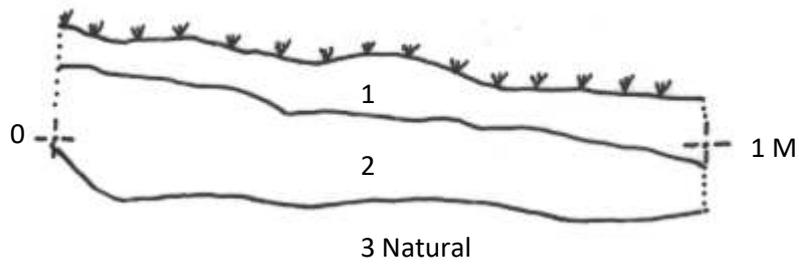


Fig. 25: South Facing Section: Test Pit 18

Finds: Pl. 83

Context 2

Pl. 83

i) 1 rounded fragment of grey, highly vitrified, vesicular ashy slag. Total weight: 39gms.



Pl. 83: Rounded, highly vitrified, ashy, slag fragment – Context 2.

Test Pit 19

Turf (1) and (2) a dark brown, clay, silt were removed together onto (3), the natural surface, which consisted here of a grey/brown, sandy, silt which overlay hard golden/yellow sandstone bedrock at a maximum depth of 260mm. (**Fig. 26**; **PI. 84**).



PI. 84: Test Pit 19: (2) removed onto (3).

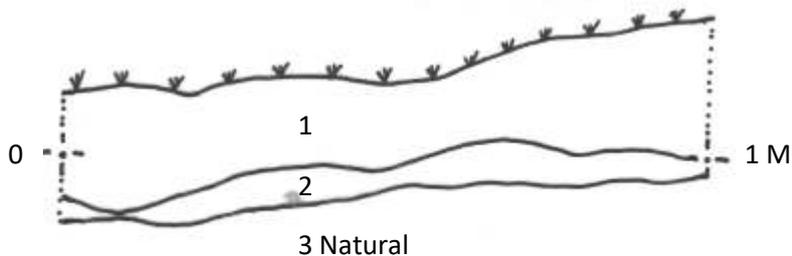


Fig. 26: North Facing Section: Test Pit 19.

Finds: PI. 85

Context 2

PI. 85

i) Heavily abraded, rounded, sherd of ? Bronze Age pottery, exhibiting incised finger nail impressions on outer surface. Red/orange, oxidised fabric. Total weight: 6gms.



Pl. 85: Highly abraded, rounded, sherd of Bronze Age pottery – Context 2.

Test Pit 20

Turf (1) and subsoil (2) were removed together onto (3), the natural surface. (2), was a mid/brown, clay, silt. (3), consisted of hard, golden/yellow, sandstone bedrock with patches of mid brown clay silt. (**Fig. 27; Pl. 20**).



Pl. 86: Test Pit 20: (2) removed onto (3).

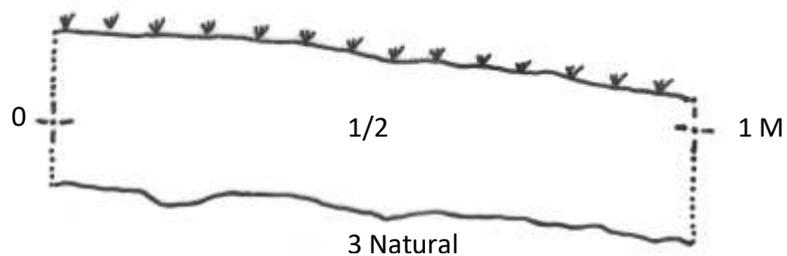


Fig. 27: South Facing Section: Test Pit 20.

Finds: No archaeological finds recorded

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to: Elaine Edgar, Yvonne Conchie, James Fell and the Board of Directors at Epiacum Heritage for facilitating this Test Pitting Exercise. Elaine, Yvonne and James also maintained the project blog over the period of the work. Stewart Ainsworth and Richard Carlton also deserve special mention for sharing their surveying and computer cartography skills. The surveyed plan of the test pit locations (Figs. 3 and 4) could not have been completed without Richard's help and Stewart produced the surveyed plan/geophysics/test pit overlay (Fig. 5). Damian Rudge, Paul Frodsham and Hannah Flint all performed above and beyond the call of duty in helping with the final recording of the test pits and the back-filling – I would probably still be up there without your help! I would also like to thank John Edgar for site access and for allowing us to store tools and equipment at Holymire, and finally I would like to give a big thank you to all those people who participated in and supported the project – I really enjoyed your company and I hope that you found the work informative and rewarding!

REFERENCES

- Hale, D. 2009. Whitley Castle, Tynedale, Northumberland: geophysical surveys'. Unpublished report 2149. Archaeological Services Durham University.
- Oswald, A. 1975. *Clay Pipes for the Archaeologist*, British Archaeological Reports, 14. Oxford, B.A.R. 207pp.
- Ryder, P. F. 1995. *Towers and Bastles in Northumberland Part IV: Tynedale District*. Unpublished Report prepared for English Heritage, held in Northumberland HER.
- Went, D. and Ainsworth, S. 2009. *Whitley Castle, Tynedale, Northumberland: An Archaeological Investigation of the Roman Fort and its Setting*. English Heritage Research Dept Report Series No. 89 – 2009.