

EXCAVATIONS AT 30 EAST ST. HELEN STREET, ABINGDON, 1980, 1981 & 1985-6

Based on notes written by Jeff Wallis, Roger Ainslie and others. Compiled and edited in 2005 by Bob Eeles

SUMMARY OF 1980 and 1981 EXCAVATIONS

The Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society were invited to complete a Trench (Trench 1) begun by the house owner in an area on the eastern side of the rear wing. This trench was enlarged and excavated to undisturbed natural gravel. The first c. 0.9 m. of mixed soils contained recent backfill. Undisturbed archaeology was reached at a depth of between 0.9 m. and 1.2 m. A corner of what is thought to be a 16th century well construction pit and remnants of a collapsed well lining occupied the southwest corner of Trench 1. Much of the deposit above had slumped down into this feature and because of its instability was not fully excavated. A segment of a large Medieval circular pit occupied the eastern part of Trench 1. It cut a Roman gully and a circular Middle Iron Age pit. The latter contained sherds of 9 bead rim vessels (or perhaps 9 sherds of a bead rim vessel) and fragments of daub. An early Roman V-shaped gully with a squared slot in its base was cut by the Medieval pit and cut the Middle Iron Age pit. At 90° to the V-shaped gully, and cut in part by the well construction pit, was a U-shaped gully, probably also of early Roman date. In Trench 2 a spread of coal and compacted earth indicated the use of the garden as a 19th century coal yard. Undisturbed levels were exposed below this. A line of limestone rubble surrounded by brown stony earth ran north-south along the trench. The nature of this stonework did not suggest that it came from structural features. This part of the garden was undisturbed archaeologically and so the trench at this depth was sealed with plastic sheeting and backfilled. Another AAAHS excavation occurred between 1985 and 1986. Unfortunately from the information that is available it is not possible to produce a more detailed write up than the one given here.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society (AAAHS) members such as Roger Ainslie, John Carter, Rachel Everett, Alison Gledhill, Kerry Johnson, Godfrey Jones, Jackie Smith, Roger Thomas and Jeff Wallis (there were many more). Excavations would not have been possible but for the late Miss Dorothea Pickering who provided shelter, sustenance and facilities for excavation and post-excavation work.

Editors comments

Much of the following information was written in a variety of unpublished documents shortly after the original 1980 and 1981 excavations. The 1980 excavation report and (I believe) the finds descriptions were written by Jeff Wallis in a style, and using pottery descriptions, similar to that used at the time by the journal *Oxoniensia*. Roger Ainslie wrote the notes and pottery descriptions for the 1981 excavation in a style more suited for inclusion in *CBA9 Newsletter/South Midland Archaeology*. For various reasons (see below) it is now no longer possible to write this work up properly and submit it for publication to a refereed academic journal. Instead the various notes have been compiled, revised/updated to some extent, references have been added, and the whole edited by Bob Eeles (hereafter, Ed.) who was not present at the time of the excavations and who has had to rely on the old archive and slide collections (all the latter being under-exposed and out-of-focus – I have scanned copies of these). The Ed currently holds much of the existing archive material so far as he is aware.

This note provides additional information for the site, which has been excavated a number of times before (e.g. by John Maddicott in 1966, 1967, 1968 and George Lambrick in 1968). A hand-written note from 1968 (author unknown) lists residual Romano-British, Medieval (“very small amounts”) and 17th-19th Century pottery from a trench dug across the driveway. Unfortunately and following the death of Miss D. Pickering all excavated finds, once housed at 30 East St Helen Street, were thrown away with the general rubbish by representatives of the current owners. Prior to its disposal I (Ed.) examined approximately 4 m³ of boxed and bagged finds and noted substantial quantities of Medieval pottery (significantly more than is accounted for in this note, much from unlabelled bags and boxes which may have been excavated between 1966-68 and 1985-86) and animal bones (mostly domestic animals such as sheep, cattle, horse and pig), complete and broken medieval floor tiles (some glazed and possibly found during the 1967 excavation), a circular limestone (oolitic) ‘net-sinker’ of probable medieval date¹ and a small collection of Roman coins (not incorporating the Claudian example mentioned below that was found in 1966). A (readable) piece of 14th century parchment was also found in 1968. One or two of the more complete and ‘interesting’ artefacts were said to have been removed from the house in the period shortly before the remainder of the finds were disposed of. I have been unable to verify what the finds were, where they now reside or who removed them. Attempts were made to preserve the material from this site by the Ed. Finds had

¹ Cf. Thomas, R. (1981). Stone weights from the Thames. *Oxoniensia*, 46, pp. 130-133. The small size and circular shape of this object is unlike those illustrated in Thomas and implies a different function, perhaps, a loomweight.

been transferred to a damp cellar (also filled with 'green' and decaying wood!) in 30 East St Helen Street where the original storage boxes quickly rotted away. Concerns were raised with respect to the condition of the finds (and also with respect to the structural integrity of the house by local building inspectors). The AAAHS agreed to purchase brand-new 'museum boxes' (which, through no fault of the AAAHS, failed to materialise) and I was on stand-by to pack the material. On the appointed day of collection (assuming the 'museum boxes' were also arriving with the transport vehicle) the representative of Oxford Museums Stores, Standlake, failed to arrive and when contacted had completely forgotten about the arrangement. The telephone comment by this individual "oh, I wondered why I'd written your name in my diary" highlights the lack of concern with regard to the finds from the property. Repeated efforts to re-schedule the collection of the finds met with similar broken promises. It was during this drawn-out process that the finds were discarded after having been left outside for 2 months next to the 'wheelie-bin'.

INTRODUCTION

30 East St Helen Street (St Ethelwold's House) is situated on first terrace gravels (OD. 51 m.), in the heart of Medieval Abingdon, in what is now recognised as also having been the centre of a medium-sized Roman town, whose origins date back to the Early Iron Age². The site lies on the northern bank of the Thames (NGR SU 498968) where the Abbey Mill Stream joins the modern navigable channel. The confluence of the River Ock is situated 150 m. downstream. Other archaeological investigations in this part of the town³ revealed evidence of occupation throughout prehistory. There seems to have been a concentration of Early Iron Age - Late Iron Age and early Roman activity in the southern part of the town⁴ intensifying in the Medieval period. Later Roman occupation occurred on the northern edge of the town⁵.

OTHER EXCAVATIONS AT No. 30

Architectural surveys in the 1960's identified (above-ground) house features dating between the 14th and 19th centuries⁶. Exploratory trenches excavated to the rear, side and cellar of the house⁷ produced evidence of a Roman building (daub and a roof tile fragment) and early Roman ceramics in the vicinity. A Roman roof tile fragment and early Roman ceramics were also found c. 100 m. away at Fairlawn Wharf⁸. A Roman coin (Claudius, dated 47 AD.) was found (in 1966 at a depth of '5 feet') indicating rapid post-conquest occupation (not necessarily – Ed.) in this part of the town. Large quantities of Roman, Medieval and Post-Medieval sherds were recovered. Smaller quantities of Iron Age ceramics were found, which were recorded in greater quantities nearby in Lombard Street⁹ and in West St. Helen Street¹⁰. Many fragments of iron slag, evidence of a furnace and pottery indicate the presence of a 13th century metalworking area.

TRENCH 1 1980

A trial trench situated 45 m from the river edge, begun by Miss D. Pickering, measured 2.5 m x 1.5 m and exposed an orange clay loam 1.3 m below the modern ground surface. This cut through rubble and sand mixed with garden soils and then grey-brown soil containing a range of Medieval and Roman sherds together with roof tiles and Stonesfield slates. This trench was widened by the AAAHS due to the depth of archaeological deposits and for safety reasons. The top 0.9 m was very loose and crumbling. A trench 3.3 m x 2.4 m was laid out with the original trench in its centre. The northern edge abutted a wooden conservatory and the western edge a corridor of stone and timber construction, which was a modern addition to the east wall of the rear wing. The enlarged trench was

² Miles, D. (1973). 'Lombard Street', CBA Group 9 Newsletter 3, p. 23. T.G. Allen. (1990). 'Abingdon Vineyard Redevelopment', *South Midlands Archaeology*, 20. T.G. Allen. (1991) 'An 'oppidum' at Abingdon, Oxfordshire', *South Midlands Archaeology*, 21. T.G. Allen. (1993). 'Abingdon Vineyard 1992: Areas 2 and 3, the Early Defences', *South Midlands Archaeology*, 23. T.G. Allen. (1997). 'Abingdon: West Central Redevelopment Area', *South Midlands Archaeology*, 27, 50.

³ Parrington, M. (1974), 'Small Excavations in Abingdon 1973', *Oxoniensia*, xxxix, pp. 34-43. Parrington, M. (1975a), 'Excavations at the Old Gaol, Abingdon', *Oxoniensia*, xl, pp. 59-78. Parrington, M. (1975b), 'Fairlawn Wharf, Abingdon', *Oxoniensia*, xl, p. 104. Parrington, M. & Balkwill, C. (1975), 'Excavations at Broad Street, Abingdon', *Oxoniensia*, xl, pp. 5-58. Wilson, B. & Wallis, J. (1991). Prehistoric Activity, Early Roman Building, Tenement Yards and Gardens behind Twickenham House, Abingdon. *Oxoniensia*, lvi, pp. 1-15.

⁴ Parrington, M. (1974).

⁵ Parrington, M. (1974). Parrington, M. & Balkwill, C. (1975). Excavations by AAAHS at 64 Bath Street.

⁶ Unpublished archive material held by AAAHS.

⁷ Parrington, M. (1974). Unpublished archive material held by AAAHS.

⁸ Parrington, M. (1975b).

⁹ Miles, D. (1973).

¹⁰ Clayton, N.B. (1972). CBA Group 9 Newsletter 2, p. 22. Miles, D. (1973).

within 1.2 m of standing structures so could not be excavated further north or west. Enlargement in an easterly direction was avoided because previous archaeological investigations had removed deposits to within 1 m. of the trench.

Layer 2, 30 cm in depth, proved to be recent and consisted of disturbed garden soils, grey-black earth, lenses of sand and fragments of roof tile. Finds included Roman, 18th and 19th century ceramics. Two water pipe trenches had been cut into **Layer 2**. A lead main supply running north-south, parallel to the house whose construction trench penetrated to a depth of 6.5 cm and at a slightly higher level an iron pipe, crossing the trench east-west taking a water supply to an adjacent outhouse, whose construction trench had been sunk to 1.3 m. Both had been backfilled with rubble clinker and gravel mixed earth. Finds included fragments of Medieval glazed tiles. These were noted in previous excavations at number 30, and next-door at number 32, and may have been removed from Abingdon Abbey after the dissolution (Ed.). The backfill material was said to have come from a previous excavation in the house cellar floor. At the southwest corner of **Trench 1** the water pipe trench cut into a rectangular area consisting of a layer of gravel with tightly compacted rubble. This feature was first recognised at 2.5 m and was seen to cut **Layer 2**. The function of the compacted rubble is thought to have been a soak away as indicated by broken ceramic drainpipe. It occupied the top part of an earlier well, the stone rubble probably being the remains of a lining or packing material between the construction pit and lining.

The remaining deposit, occupying the eastern quarter of the trench, consisted of loose earth with gravel and occasional rubble. It appeared to occupy part of a large circular feature or the edge of backfilled archaeological trench that was sited within the confines and east of this excavation. Finds were Medieval and Roman. Brick fragments and cardboard packaging at a depth of 2.3 m confirmed that this constituted previous backfilling material.

After removal of modern disturbance several features were seen. The edge of **Pit 15** was observed at the eastern edge occupying the entire section, with its curving form jutting 75 cm into the excavation. This feature cut **Layer 6**, a grey-brown earth containing limestone, charcoal and Medieval and Roman sherds. Also cutting **Layer 6** was the corner of a square well construction **Trench (12)** seen at a depth of 2.5 m in the southwest part of the excavation. The well lining was in a very disturbed condition, its true edge unrecognisable and its courses disarranged probably after stone robbing during construction of the soakaway. The feature was excavated for 40 cm in the hope of obtaining datable artefacts but because of its instability excavation was taken no further. Dating is, therefore, not firm but it is likely to be Post-Medieval. Tripod pitcher sherds and bones were recovered from the loose mortar flecked fill which became very loose, with many voids, indicating the presence of a well shaft whose dimensions were impossible to tell. **Layer 6** was cut by modern disturbance in its northeastern sector that continued to cut down through this layer as if a continuation of the water pipe trench. This layer was perhaps a Medieval occupation soil some 15 cms deep that originally covered the whole of the trench at a depth of 1.7 m below site datum (Site Datum = 59.11 m).

Pit 15 had an estimated diameter of (Unreadable measurement given - Ed.) and cut 1.64 m into natural gravel with a total depth of 5.12 m below Site Datum. This feature had been partially excavated, undisturbed pit fill being encountered at 2.8 m from the surface. Descriptions of its layers directly under the deepest modern penetration were as follows:-

15/1 A coarse brown loose textured earth with 10% gravel (98 cm max. depth) seen on the eastern side of the feature. Previous investigations appeared to have removed part of it from the western end, thus exposing **Layer 15/2**.

15/2 A green-stained earth with gravel and charcoal flecks slumping down each side of the thin central area, which was 1.06 m deep. Limestone fragments were common and randomly distributed within this layer that overlay **15/3** and **15/4**.

15/3 This dipped east under **15/2**. The only difference being a grey colour, 36 cm deep.

15/4 This became deeper towards its western end. It comprised a pale-green stained earth with gravel and charcoal and a scatter of limestone.

15/5 Alternating bands of fine powdery ash, grey, brown and green in colour. The layer (max. depth 20 cms) dipped towards the west.

15/6 Was 5.2 cms deep and consisted of fine brown earth directly beneath the ash. The only feature within it was a tip line of sand that predated the ash deposit and penetrated the layer below.

15/7 Was 15 cms deep showing no evidence of piling up or dumping. The layer make up was similar to the post-glacial orange loam (**8**) but contained the 'parent' gravel. The bottom of the pit was generally flat but uneven with a vertical edge. Its general impression suggested a large rubbish pit. It contained large quantities of ash.

After removal of **Layer 6** an area of dark brown loam was seen to spread over the undisturbed surface of the trench. The soils were divided into two layers by a slight textural change, which blended without perceptible edges.

Layer 7 (85 cm deep) consisted of a grey-black charcoal flecked stony loam that was seen in the southern part of the trench and abutted the south section. Finds from **Layers 6** and **7** indicate a Post-Roman occupation layer.

Post Hole (10/1) and its recut (**10**) were circular, c. 20 cm in diameter, with the first cut being smaller. **Feature 10** was 9 cm deep with its semi-circular base 1.31 m below Site Datum. The original hole was of similar depth. Both features cut through **Layer 9** (46 cm deep) and into the top of the red-orange loam (**8**). **10** contained the remnant of post packing in the form of six ovoid limestone fragments c. 4 cm across, the rest being filled with a loose black earth with 5% gravel. The position of the packing and its relationship to the edge of the feature indicated an ovoid or circular section post.

The removal of **Layers 7** and **9** exposed first a dirty orange then a clean orange-brown fine sandy loam (**8**) which has been identified at other sites in and around Abingdon. The loam (**8**) was cut by the well, and associated construction **Pit (12)**, and by **Pit 15**. The earlier trial trench located part of **Layer 8** whose surface was horizontal at 1.34 m below Site Datum. Two small animal burrows (labelled as 'mole' on a section drawing, Ed) were found running west from the southern section.

Feature 13 consisted of a gully running west-east from the western trench section. It was filled with sandy-grey silt with charcoal flecks blending with **Layer 7** above. U-shaped in profile it was 45 cm wide x c. 20 cm at its south-western end. The base was 1.33 m below Site Datum. **Feature 13** was positioned at 90° to a similar but larger **Gully (14)**. The relationship between these was unclear because a corner of the well construction **Pit (12)** cut both features at the point of intersection. However, in one section it appeared they were contemporary and converged, both merging into a single gully running south-east and seen in the southern section as **Feature 14**.

Feature 14 cut diagonally across **Trench 1** and was traceable for 2.34 m where it was seen in the northern trench section. Part of its fill had been removed during construction of **Pit 15**. It contained a similar sandy-grey silt to **13** but had a slightly more clay-like consistency without charcoal flecks. It was on average 70 cms wide x 58 cms deep. It contained a small squared slot (14 cm wide x 5 cm deep) with a similar fill to the gully. It was traceable for 98 cms at the bottom of **14** but not observed along its entire length. The bottom of the northern end was 1.69 m below Site Datum. and at its intersection with **13**, 1.74 m below Site Datum.. It also penetrated **Layer 8** and cut into gravel. A green stain within it may have represented traces of a copper or bronze object. At the southern section the top part of this feature, at the point where it merged and changed direction, was truncated by the base of modern disturbance and its western lip was cut by the well construction **Pit (12)**. **13** and **14** were certainly Pre-Medieval, post 2nd century BC and probably early Roman. The slot in **14** would indicate Roman work.

Feature (Pit) 16 was a segment of an Iron Age circular pit originally 1.2 m in diameter. It had been cut by **Pit 15** on its northeast side and **Gully 14** on its west leaving c. one third intact. A half section across it was seen in the side of **Pit 15**. **Pit 16** was 0.75 m below the top of **Layer 8** where it was observed in plan. Its sides flared slightly leading down into a slightly hollow base. The fill was a grey-brown silty loam containing limestone fragments, 5% gravel and patches of orange loam derived from **Layer 8**. Twenty cms from its top was a wedge shaped tip of black soil and charcoal with a maximum depth of 6 cms. This feature contained the sherds of nine bead rim bowls dating from the 2nd - 3rd Century BC. Other finds were two burned quartzite pebbles, three pieces of burned limestone and two burned bones. A tooth and three bone fragments were unburned. Four pieces of daub indicate a possible structure in the vicinity. The pit (**16**) cut 37 cm into natural gravel.

DISCUSSION

Because of the restricted nature of the excavation only a limited interpretation is possible. The earliest feature was **Pit 16** dating to c. 200 BC with contents implying domestic activity nearby. It has many local parallels, e.g. Thrupp¹¹ and nearby at Lombard Street¹².

Gully 14 and **Gully 15** are thought to be contemporary; **14** clearly seen to cut the Iron Age **Pit 16**. **Gully 14** with its distinctive slot was probably Roman. Slotted gullies with dateable finds have occurred before in Abingdon.

Identification of Iron Age and Roman features provides additional evidence of occupation within the limits of the modern town. Evidence of Roman architecture has been recorded previously at Stratton Way, Bath Street and Fairlawn Wharf¹³. Roman Abingdon was a medium-sized town, perhaps with a wharf and associated buildings, likely to have taken advantage of river-borne transport along the Thames and Ock. As yet no firm road system, linked to Abingdon, connects it with Frilford or Dorchester.

Layer 7 and **Layer 9** the grey-black ('Roman Black') loams may be seen as the latest Roman or a post-Roman 'occupation soil' that has been observed on many urban sites in this country.

The only other datable feature was the Medieval circular **Pit 15**. Fragments of iron slag and distinct bands of ash near its bottom indicate it was used for disposal of metal working waste and latterly for rubbish disposal.

The rectangular nature of the edge of the presumed well and associated construction pit, and the loose limestone rubble and voids between them suggest this function originally and its later re-use as a convenient soak-away. It remains undated but is likely to be c. 16th century in date. Fragments of glass from this area and 18th century ceramics from above would support this conclusion. Deposits above the well reflect more recent history. The many sand lenses were perhaps remnants of a child's recreation area when St. Ethelwold's House was a school between 1964-66.

Future work should examine (and, in fact, did, but inconclusively as the river bank appears to have migrated many metres southwards after many centuries of rubbish dumping, Jeff Wallis, *Pers. Comm.* to Ed.) areas near the waterfront. Waterlogged timbers of early wharves may be sought and the character of early riverside stratigraphy could be examined without the pressures of rescue archaeology.

The finds descriptions for the Medieval pottery (Table 1) make use of a system of identification that is not now in vogue, seemingly the system used in, e.g. the Broad Street report¹⁴. It is beyond my (Ed.) capabilities to attempt a conversion to currently used nomenclature¹⁵ and, as stated in the introduction, it is no longer possible to re-examine the finds. No weights are given. Finds from **Trench 2** (Table 2) seem to use a partially outdated nomenclature for the Medieval pottery descriptions.

Complete Medieval pots in fabrics identical to those found at 30 East St Helen Street were recovered at the bottom of a well in Winsmore Lane by John Cooper and Jeff Wallis of the AAAHS. Images of two of these are included here as it is no longer possible to show examples from Saint Ethelwold's House (Ed.).

TABLE 1. FINDS BY LAYER

Descriptions:- Dec. = Decoration. Fab. = Fabric. Int. = Interior. Ext. = Exterior. Frag/s. = Fragment/s. Temp. = Temper.

TOPSOIL	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY
Roman	Coarseware	1 rim sherd
	Pink fabric with orange slip, small roulette dec.	1 body sherd
	Large necked jar, fine hard grey fab.	1 rim sherd
	Greyish fab	3 body sherd
Medieval	Fab. A, cooking pot = OXAG = Abingdon A = ABA	1 rim, 1 base, 3 body sherd
	Fab. B = OXBF?	1 body sherd.
	Fab. J = Stamford Ware	4 body sherd

¹¹ **Everett, R.N. & Eeles R.M.G.** (1999), 'Investigations at Thrupp House Farm, Radley near Abingdon. *Oxoniensia*, lxiv, pp. 117-152.

¹² **Miles, D.** (1973).

¹³ E.g. **Parrington, M.** (1975b).

¹⁴ **Parrington M. & Balkwill C.** (1975).

¹⁵ **Mellor, M.** (1994). 'Oxfordshire Pottery: A synthesis of middle- and late-Saxon, Medieval and early post-Medieval pottery in the Oxford Region'. *Oxoniensia*, lix, pp. 17-217.

Post-Medieval		Medieval/Tudor roof tile, mottled green glaze int. & ext., grey fab.	1 frag.
		Shallow dish with large internal flange, fine hard grey fab.	1 rim sherd
		Brown int. & ext. glaze	1 body sherd
		Clear int. glaze, red fab., with grey core	1 body sherd
Undated		Oyster shell	2 frags.
		Clay pipe	1 frag.
		Flint wall knapping debris (?)	1
		Burned bone	4 frags.
		Bone	77 frags. Including 1 tooth
		Limestone	5 frags.
		Stonesfield slate	1 frag.
LAYER 2			
Undated		Oyster shell	6 frags.
		Glass	Unknown number of frags.
		Burned bone	1 frag.
		Bone	66 frags. Including 1 jaw & 5 teeth
		Charcoal	
		Limestone	2 frags.
		Roof tile	2 frags.
		Unidentified pottery	4 sherds
LAYER 4			
Iron Age		Carinated bowl, burnished	1 sherd
Late-Saxon	9 th -11 th	OXB (?) with shell 2 mm. Thick, pinkish ext.,	1 sherd
		Green glazed tripod pitcher with vertically applied stripe	2 sherds
		Sandy unglazed fab.	1 sherd
Medieval	<i>Uncertain date</i>	Brown glazed	1 sherd
		<i>Uncertain date</i> Brownish-red smooth sandy fab.	1 sherd
		14 th Cistercian type	(No additional data)
		15 th Bowl, pinkish, clear int. glaze	1 sherd
		15 th Buff fab., 6 mm. Thick	1 sherd
Post-Medieval	18 th -19 th	Clay pipe	1 piece
Uncertain		Black cooking pot (Iron Age or Medieval?)	20 sherds
Undated		Oyster shell	1 frag.
		Glass	1 frag.
		Bone	25 frags. Including 1 jaw & 3 teeth
		Red roof tile	1 frag.
		Patterned paving tile	1 frag.
		Charcoal	
		Burned cobble	1
		Limestone	1 frag.
Unspecified in site notes		Fab. A, applied finger dec., cooking pot. = OXAG	1 body sherd
		Coarse grey fab., large flint & limestone inclusions, red int. and ext.	1 large rim sherd
		Pot with large gritty inclusions	4 sherds
		Cooking pot in reduced sandy fab.	19 sherds
		Sandy-buff fab., with extended streak of dark-green glaze	1 sherd
		Sandy-buff fab., with blob of yellow glaze & red paint	1 sherd
LAYER 6			
Undated		Bone	5 frags.
Unspecified in site notes		Grey-black sandy fab., cooking pot	3 sherds
		Black burnished, 1 with limestone, 1 with sand	1 rim & 2 body sherds
		Grey-black sandy cooking pot	12 sherds
		Greyish, flint temp.	1 sherd
		Buff-grey, slightly glazed, tripod pitcher (?)	1 sherd
		Greyish fab., buff ext., (Post-Medieval ?)	1 rim sherd
		Red-brown, sandy fab.	1 rim sherd
		Coarse pot, flint temp.	4 sherds
		Black cooking pot	5 sherds. 4 sand temp. 1 sand & flint temp.
		Red, sandy fab., with slight ext. glaze	1 sherd

PIT 11		
Iron Age	Bead rim bowl, sandy fab., highly burnished	1 rim sherd
	Bead rim bowl, sooty ext. fine sandy fab., much leached	1 sherd
	Bead rim bowl, sandy fab., slight traces of burnishing	1 sherd
	Bead rim bowl, (MIA), shell/chalk temp.	1 base & 4 body sherds
	Fine sandy fab., with burnished linear pattern	1 body sherd
	Shell/chalk temp.	1 body sherd
	Large shell temp. (2 mm.)	1 body sherd
	Sand temp., white marks on both surfaces	1 body sherd
	Barrel jar	1 body sherd
	With large shell inclusions	1 body sherd
Roman	Coarseware storage jar	1 rim sherd
	Crude butt beaker	1 body sherd
	Necked jar	1 base, 2 body, 3 rim sherds.
	Sandy orange fab.	1 base sherd
	Sandy white fab.	1 sherd
	Grey	3 body sherds
	Grey, (necked jar?)	2 rim sherds
	Fine butt beaker	3 body sherds
	Grey sand temp.	4 body sherds
	Flagon, pink/grey fab., with soot stains (Oxford kilns ?)	1 neck sherd
	Red oxidised colour coat with white slip dec.	1 body sherd
	Oxford colour coat (form 47)	1 foot ring
	Unidentified	1 sherd.
Medieval	Tripod pitcher, yellow ext. glaze	1 body sherd
	Cooking pot (Type 23)	1 rim sherd
	Cooking pots	56 body, 3 rim & 7 base sherds
	Cooking pot, applied finger dec.	1 body sherd
	Cooking pot	1 neck sherd
	Cooking pot, (Type 10)	2 rim sherds
	Cooking pot, buff surfaces	1 neck sherd
	Cooking pot, (Type 10), vertically applied cordon	1 rim sherd
	Cooking pot, (Type 11)	1 rim sherd
<i>Tudor green (?)</i>	Green glazed	2 body sherds
	Buff surfaces, (Type 39)	1 rim sherd
	Mottled green glaze, (Type 57)	1 rim sherd
	Incised banded & waved dec.	6 body sherds
	Orange/yellow glaze, incised banded & waved dec.	1 body sherd
	Dark green/brown glaze, incised horizontal banded dec.	2 body sherds
	Buff/orange, ext. & int.	1 body sherd
	Jar or pitcher	1 rim sherd
	Buff ext., whitish-buff int.	1 body sherd
	Orange/green ext. glazes, grey int.	6 body sherds
	Orange/green ext. glazes, grey int., with rouletted horizontal dec.	2 body sherds
	Leached green ext. glaze, buff int., horizontal banded incised dec.	1 body sherd
	Fab. B = OXBF?	1 base & 7 body sherds
	Fab. C, (cooking pot?)	1 neck & 2 body sherds
	Fab. F = OXB?	1 body sherd
	Fab. G = OXB?	1 body sherd
Undated	Burned bones	2 frags
	Bones	185 frags. Including 3 jaws & 15 teeth
	Burned flint	1 frag.
	Burned limestone	5 frags.
	Charcoal	
	Glass	3 frags.
	Iron	1 frag.
	Oyster shell	5 frags.
	Slag	1 frag.
	Mortar	2 frags.
	Daub	5 frags. 1 with painted ext.
	Roof tile	1 frag.
PIT 15		
Iron Age	Bead rim bowl (Middle Iron Age?)	1 body (?) sherd
Roman	Samian	
	Butt beaker, roulette dec., white ext. & int., pink core	1 body sherd
	Butt beaker, white int. cream ext.	1 body sherd
	Wheel-turned necked bowls (LIA?)	4 sherds
	Wheel-turned, grey sandy fab. (LIA?)	4 sherds
Medieval	Fab. A, (Type 10), Cooking pot, finger tip dec. = OXAG	1 rim sherd

	Fab. A, Tripod pitcher foot, trace of pale-green glaze = OXAG	1 sherd
	Fab. A, (Type 7), tripod pitcher, yellow-green glaze = OXAG	1 rim sherd
	Fab. A, cooking pot = OXAG	7 body sherd
	Fab. A, cooking pot (?), smudged green glaze = OXAG	1 body sherd
	Fab. A, mottled yellow/green ext. glaze = OXAG	1 body (?) sherd
	Fab. A, = OXAG	5 body sherds
	Fab. B, cooking pot, applied finger dec. = OXBF?	1 body sherd
	Fab. B = OXBF?	1 base sherd
	Fab. B, cooking pot (?) = OXBF?	2 body sherds
	Fab. C (Type 62), large dish	1 rim & 1 base sherd
	Fab. C	2 body sherds
	Fab. D, jug/pitcher (?), pale green/yellow glaze = OXAW	1 body sherd
	Fab. D, Mottled yellow/green ext. glaze = OXAW	1 body sherd
Undated	Bone	70 frags. Including 7 teeth
	Iron	2 frags.
	Charcoal	
PIT 16		
Neolithic (?)	Unpatinated blade with hinge fracture, prepared striking platform	1
	Small unpatinated blade	1
Iron Age	Burnished bead rim bowl	5 sherds
	Highly burnished bead rim bowl, thick walled	2 sherds
	Sandy orange fab., with soot stains	1 rim & 2 body sherds
	Bead rim bowl with shell temp., sandy orange fab.	1 rim sherd
	Grey/black fab., highly burnished, bead rim bowl (?)	1 body sherd
	Grey-buff soot stained sandy fab., burnished	1 body sherd
	Shell and grog temp.	1 body sherd
	Buff pink coarse fab., with shell temp., & surface eruptions	1 body sherd
	Burnished bowl (?), shell temp.	1 body sherd
Undated	Burned bone	2 frags.
	Bone	32 frags., including 1 tooth
	Burned limestone	3 frags.
	Burned quartzite pebbles	2
	Daub	4 frags.
	Charcoal	

TRENCH 2 1981

Trench 2 measuring 4 m x 1 m was located 3 m south of **Trench 1** and was continued on the same axis as its eastern section. It was placed to find traces of a demolished or robbed wall footing of an east wing adjoining the rear wing of the present house that interior features suggested may have been present.

Layer 10 produced large pieces of tripod pitcher of late 12th-early 14th century date. This was overlaid by **Layer 7**; a layer of greyish soil probably garden rather than rubbish dumping.

Pits (Layers) 4 and 9 cut **Layer 7**. **Pit (Layer) 4** besides having a sherd of Oxford 'T' type ware, which can be dated to the mid 11th century, had a sherd of AT (? Ed. possibly the writer transcribed the 'J' in OXAJ as a 'T' here in the text) ware of late 12th-15th century date. **Pit (Layer) 4** was cut by **Walls (Layers) 5 and 6**. **Wall (Layer) 5** was a line of rubble along the south side of the cutting. At most it can only have been a sleeper wall for a timber beam to rest upon. A sherd of OXBG ware dates this to the 12th-14th century. This was cut by footing, (**Layer) 6**, a patch of stones c. 30 cms x 20 cms, which was 2 stones deep. This could have been the base of a vertical piece of timber framing of the same date. **Pit (Layer) 9** (c. 16th century or later) was stratigraphically unrelated to the walls.

Above these was a grey-brown earthy **Layer 3**, which contained a small sherd of Cistercian-type ware of 16th century date. The building had evidently gone out of use by then as it covered **Walls (Layers) 5 and 6**. All deposits later than **Layer 3** must have been destroyed when William Pemberton's coal yard was established in the 1880's. The coal yard was sold in 1909¹⁶ and the area was developed as a private garden.

DISCUSSION

Residual finds of flint, Iron Age, Roman and 8th-11th century pottery indicate deposits of these dates exist in the vicinity. The occurrence of some of the earliest pottery in the highest layers is attributable to previous excavations, garden alterations and other disturbances.

¹⁶ D. Pickering, *Pers. Comm.*

In places I (Ed.) have added additional information where a fabric type corresponds with one in Mellor¹⁷ or where in the original report dating is now known to have been inaccurate.

TABLE 2. FINDS BY LAYER

Descriptions:- Dec. = Decoration. Fab. = Fabric. Int. = Interior. Ext. = Exterior. Frag/s. = Fragment/s. Temp. = Temper.

TOPSOIL	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY
Roman (?)	Grey int., pink towards outer surface, grey ext. Wheel thrown	1 base sherd (5 g.)
Late-Saxon		
10 th	Oxford BU	1 sherd (6 g.)
Medieval		
12 th -13 th	OXAG. Late Saxon-Medieval Abingdon ware ¹⁷ = ABA = Fab. A	(No additional data)
12 th -14 th	ABA, Late Saxon-Medieval Abingdon ware ¹⁷ = OXAG	1 sherd (3 g.)
14 th -15 th	Oxford BC	(No additional data)
Tudor Green	Abingdon M = Surrey Border Ware	1 sherd (12 g.)
Post-Medieval		
17 th	White fine stoneware, 1.5 mm. thick	1 sherd (2 g.)
c. 17 th	Clay pipes, 1 bowl	11 stem pieces (35 g.)
18 th	Creamware	2 sherds (10 g.)
18 th -19 th	Coarse stoneware	1 rim (15 g.)
19 th	Coarse stoneware	1 rim (15 g.)
	Plain pearl enamel	11 sherds (35 g.)
	Hard red pot with clear int. glaze	4 frags. (85 g.)
	Red roof tile, hard sandy fab.	2 frags. (110 g.)
	Glass	3 frags., bottle, 2 frags., window (25 g.)
LAYER 3		
Neolithic (?)	1 flint blade, 25 mm x 12 mm	
Roman	Light grey hard fab., smooth ext. surface (burnished ?)	1 sherd (13 g.)
Late-Saxon		
9 th -11 th	Oxford B, Late Saxon Oxford ware ¹⁷	(No additional data)
Medieval		
11 th -13 th	Abingdon K, = OXAC. Late Saxon and early Medieval west Oxfordshire and early Medieval Oxford ware ¹⁷	6 sherds (107 g.)
13 th -14 th	OXAM, Brill/Boarstall type ware ¹⁷	(No additional data)
	Abingdon D, = OXAW, Brill/Boarstall type ware ¹⁷	2 sherds (12 g.). Perhaps as above
Post-Medieval		
Late 17 th -19 th	Pink/red fab., clear glaze (Earliest date for latest pot 1690)	1 sherd (5 g.)
LAYER 4		
Iron Age	Burnished dark-grey ext., pale grey core, red-brown ext. Sandy fab. with large quartz inclusions & black flecks	1 rim sherd. (No additional data)
Roman	Grey sandy fab., oblique line dec.	1 sherd (10 g.)
	Hard grey sandy fab.	1 rim sherd (5 g.)
	Fine/light grey sandy fab., with black flecks, Pink ext. oblique ridge dec.	1 sherd (2 g.)
Roman?	Hard light grey/white sandy fab. with occasional black flecks, 5 mm. thick, some carbon	2 sherds (10 g.)
Medieval		
Mid 11 th	Oxford T	1 sherd (5 g.)
11 th -13 th	OXAC, Late Saxon and early Medieval west Oxfordshire and early Medieval Oxford ware ¹⁷	No sherd number given. (7 g.)
	Red roof-tile, sandy hard fab.	1 frag. (320 g.)
Late 12 th -15 th	Oxford AJ	1 sherd (5 g.)
	Red coarse sandy fab., reddish grey exterior, few limestone (?) inclusions	1 sherd (No additional data)
LAYER 5		
Roman	Samian	1 sherd (5 g.)
	Hard sandy grey fab., burnished ext.	1 sherd (5 g.)
	Hard sandy fab. (3 mm. in section), pink core to grey ext.	1 sherd (3 g.)
Late-Saxon		
Early 9 th	Oxford N	1 sherd (12 g.)
Medieval		
Late 12 th -mid 13 th	OXAH	1 sherd (12 g.)
12 th -14 th	OXBG Coarse border ware ¹⁷ (Abingdon N?)	1 sherd (5 g.)
Post-Medieval	Red roof tile, sandy fab.	1 frag. (475 g.)
LAYER 6		
Neolithic (?)	1 flint blade 40 mm x 10 mm	

¹⁷ Mellor, M. (1994)

Late-Saxon		
10 th	Oxford BT	1 sherd (15 g.)
Medieval		
13 th -14 th	Abingdon D, = OXAW, Brill/Boarstall type ware	1 sherd (3 g.)
Post-Medieval	Red roof tile, hard sandy fab.	Quantity not given. (195 g.)
LAYER 7		
Iron Age	Burnished dark grey ext., core fine sandy, brown	1 rim sherd (2 g.)
Roman	Fine light grey sandy fab. 3 mm. thick, dark grey surface with white raised dec.	1 sherd (No additional data)
Late-Saxon		
9 th	Oxford N	1 sherd (5 g.)
10 th	Oxford BQ	1 sherd (2 g.)
11 th	Oxford BP	1 sherd (40 g.)
Medieval		
Late 12 th -early 14 th	Oxford AB	1 sherd (2 g.)
Late 13 th -15 th	Oxford AP	1 sherd (2 g.)
Late 12 th -15 th	Oxford AJ	1 sherd (2 g.)
Undated	Fine red sandy core, light pink to surface	1 sherd (2 g.)
Post-Medieval	Glazed hard red sandy fab. (c. 16 th)	1 sherd (1 g.)
LAYER 9		
Roman	Fine light grey sandy fab.	1 base sherd (10 g.), 1 unspecified sherd (2 g.)
Late-Saxon		
Late 8 th -early 9 th	Oxford Q? but harder or later. Light brown coarse sandy fab., brown, white and red inclusions	1 sherd (12 g.)
Post-Medieval		
	Red fine sandy fab., yellow glaze ext.	1 rim sherd. (No additional data)
c. 16 th	Red roof tile	1 frag. (35 g.)
LAYER 10		
Medieval		
Late 11 th -early 12 th	Oxford M, Surrey Border Ware	1 sherd (5 g.)
Late 12 th -early 14 th	Oxford AB, tripod pitcher	1 sherd (335 g.)
12 th -14 th	OXY, Late Saxon and early Medieval Oxford ware	1 sherd (4 g.)

EXCAVATIONS 1985 & 1986

These were directed by Neville Trippett. A trench (substantial judging by the photograph) was dug at the end of the garden in an attempt to locate a hypothesised early wharf. The area in question contained friable mixed earths of grey to black colour. The absence of any *in-situ* archaeological layers indicates that this area was used over many generations as a rubbish dump. The original riverbank was not located and it was thought that 'bank-creep' had extended the length of the garden somewhat, perhaps to something like twice its original length. All finds were probably discarded with the remainder of the material (see above). All that remains are a few site notes, under-exposed slides and section drawings. From what is available it can be concluded that the finds, as listed in the site notes (Table 3) were similar to those of other trenches excavated by the AAHS and others. Table 3 lists the finds mentioned in the site notes but is nowhere near complete (or entirely meaningful) Ed.

TABLE 3. FINDS BY LAYER

FEATURE	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY
	Bone	
	Limestone	
	Slate	
	Roman & Medieval pottery	
FEATURE 20 1985	Tile fragments	
	Medieval glazed tile fragments	
	Green glazed sherds	
	Roman pottery	
FEATURE 21 1985	Tile	
	Bone	
	Pottery	
	Oyster shell	
FEATURE 29 1985	Oyster shells (possibly bagged)	26
FEATURE 30 1985	Tile fragments (some glazed)	
	Limestone	
FEATURE 31 1986	Green glaze 'strap handle'	
	Medieval sherds	
	Bone	
FEATURE 34 1986	Limestone rubble	55
	Quernstone frag. (?)	

	12 th Century pitcher sherds	
FEATURE 36 1986	Roman pottery	
FEATURE 37 1986	Medieval wavy-patterned sherd	
FEATURE 39 1986	Roman & Medieval pottery	
	Samian sherd	
	Broken unpatinated flint knife	
FEATURE 41 1986	Limestone rubble	12. Largest 35 cm x 3 cm
	Roman including Samian	
	Horn cores	Several
	Stonesfield slates	
FEATURE 42 1986	Limestone rubble	

Finds not included in the site notes but mentioned on a separate piece of paper were a copper-alloy ring, a bone pin, a bead, a bronze Roman coin and what the note-taker thought at the time might be a slate 'hone'.