

WC Cutting 5

The excavation of a small mound, c. 21' in diameter, east of B2 (see Fig. XXX Archive) produced a large scatter of sherds, predominantly 13th century coarseware, from the topsoil and the flinty brown loam layer over the mound's chalk core. The late 12th/early 13th century glazed sherds (**GF224** [2], **GF268**, **GF328**, **511** & **550**) and a 10th -12th century sliding bolt (**GF411**) point to activity at Wroughton Mead prior to the main phase of activity, but clearly it is reasonable to assume the mound was built in the 13th century, probable mid to later.

The top two layers, being over the chalk core, built up after the mound was constructed, possibly as a result of the mound being used as a domestic rubbish dump from the Building 1/2/3 complex. This is evinced by the number of domestic and agricultural iron work in the top layers. The low mound itself consisted of chalk lumps over redeposited clay with flints on top of a black soil layer. This was lying on a light brown clayey soil.

Excavation in the NE quadrant found the topsoil to contain a scatter of medieval pottery and nails. This was removed down to a hard packed layer of small flints, which covered the top of the mound in all four quadrants. An copper alloy annular brooch (**GF275**) came from the humic top layer of the mound and this item is dated 12th-14thC. From flint layer in the NE quadrant came a bronze finger ring (**GF232**) which can be compared with a 13th century example from Salisbury (TWA, 1). A substantial amount of C13th sherds and metal objects (**GFs 235**, iron strip frag; **237**, heckle tooth & nail shank; **460**, iron rectangular staple) were also uncovered. A N. ext. uncovered a large amount of med. pottery (**GF281**), including the rim and walls of a cooking-pot to a depth of 12". Excavation in the SW quadrant produced sherds (**GF304**) in the topsoil and in the flinty layer and an iron chain link (**GF328** - TWA, 7). The NW produced similar finds (**GFs 339**, **373**, **404**, **411**, **419** & **458**), as did the SE (**GFs 360**, **369**, **396** & **420**). **GF339**, gave an iron perforated strap frag, iron sheet frag, iron strip object, horseshoe nail type 4, 2 nails type 11 (1 possibly extracted), **GF404** a perforated strap object, **GF411**, a sliding bolt, similar to 10th -12th C examples (TWA, 7) and a white metal plated perforated fitting (TWA, 11),

Below the layer of flints was a low mound consisting of chalk lumps. This was found to continue well away from the centre of the cutting in a NW direction, and was therefore not simply a small central mound. This elongated mound of chalk lumps over redeposited clay with flints extended over the 'ditch' in the NW .

This chalk was removed down to to the red clay with flints in the SE (**GFs 398** & **451**) and in the NW (**GF464**). This layer (layer 3) overlay a black soil with small flints and charcoal (layer 4). Below this was the possible OGS (layer 5) of light brown clay (humic topsoil) over natural clay with flints (layer 6).

GFs 224, 268, 328, 511 & 550 - all contained EG ware sherds, although the majority of the pottery from these GFs is 38CW. As the EG type was noted in the topsoil and layers 1, 3 & 5, as well as the top of the 'ditch' (probably, therefore, top of layer 4.) - almost every layer, this would seem to indicate that the Wroughton Mead site experienced some sort of occupation in the early C13th and goes with B2 timber phase. Taking it one step further, as this type was noted in every layer but layer 2, then, it is likely that these sherds are from the OGS in area B1, 2 & 3 and entered these layers during the building of the mound. Thus the mound was built after the early C13th.

Two later C13th glazed sherds (**GF259**) amongst numerous coarseware ones, were only present in layer 1 and thus could be giving a date for the period after the mound was built and being used as a spoil heap.

'Ditch'

Initially a ditch was believed to exist in the SW and to the N. of the NE quadrant. A darker humus was evident in its fill, from which came many medieval sherds (**GFs 268, 282 & 457**) and an iron buckle with corroded pin (**GF283**, TWA, 8), as well as miscellaneous finds (e.g. **GF311**). The ditch was 1'11" deep below the modern surface, 12" below the clay with flints and flat bottomed. It was c. 3' wide across the top. However, it was later realised that this had been mistakenly labelled as a ditch. In fact it represented a continuation of an underlying layer, layer 4, of thick, dark, 'charcoally' material which had formed prior to the formation of the mound. This layer may well represent an occupation layer before the mound was formed and may be the OGS from area B2 & 3. If, as is the suggestion, the mound was formed by digging out the area around B2 & 3, and possibly B1, to level the ground before the construction of those buildings, then this layer (and lower ones) should be earlier than the construction phase of the aforementioned buildings, thus allowing us the possibility of a *terminus ante quem* for B1, 2 & 3.

If the 'ditch' is thus a continuation of the layer which was uncovered below the mound, as seems to be the case, then some finds from the dark black soil under the mound should be contemporaneous with those from the 'ditch'. Thus **GFs 268, 282, 283, 311 & 457** (from the 'ditch'), should be of a similar date to or earlier date than **GFs 505, 526 & 550**.

GF numbers & sequence,

Clayey brown humus/Topsoil. 3"-15".

GFs 224, 237, 275, 281, 304, 339, 360, 396, & 404 (possibly **GF411**). **GF360** contained a C12-13th hazelnut (TWA, Table 28).

Layer 1: Flinty/ flinty brown loam layer over chalk mound. 5"-18".

GFs 232, 235, 259, 268 (see 'ditch' below), **310, 328, 362, 369, 373, 398**, (possibly **GF411**), **418, 419, 420, 451, 460 & 464**

Layer built up after mound had been constructed and may represent the occupation period of the 'new' buildings (1, 2 & 3) and possibly ploughing over the mound and/or use of mound as a dump from Phase 2 occupation (numerous sherds and metal items) and later activity. The digging of a level surface would have meant digging into a Phase 1 occupation level and would therefore have thrown Phase 1 material onto the mound. As layer 1 built up after the completion of the mound it is unlikely that any Phase 1 is evident in this layer.

Layer 2: chalk/ chalk lumps with red clay. 6"-14"

GFs 398, 441, 451 & 458

This mound material is likely to be the natural chalk dug from the levelling of the ground to the W., *i.e.* under the clay with flints subsoil. As natural chalk should not contain any finds, the sherds from this layer are undoubtedly ones either dropped during the digging process and/or ones from Phase 1, into which the mound builders were digging.

Layer 3: red clay with flints. 12"-20".

GFs 494 & 511 (possibly **GF398**)

Middle of mound. Clay with flints is the natural subsoil in the area and again this originated from the digging in the W. and would have been under the Phase 1 occupation layer. It was built up on the mound at the same time, but immediately after, layer 2 and thus could feasibly contain material from an earlier occupation period.

Layer 4: brown/black soil with small flints and charcoal. To 23".

GFs 268 (top of ditch), **282, 283, 311 & 457** (from the 'ditch'), should be of a similar date to, or earlier date than, **GFs 505 & 526** (which are from this black layer). 5 hazel, 1 '*pomoideæ*' and 3 '*prunus*' charcoal pieces were from **GF282** and 3 hazel charcoal pieces from **GF311** (TWA, Table 27). **GF494** may also have finds from this layer. **GF526**, an awl, showing traces of mineral-preserved wood (TWA, 4). If layer 5 is the OGS of Phase 1 onto which this layer was placed, then layer 4 is also the OGS of Phase 1, but from the area to the W. One humic top layer was thus dumped on another. This layer of the mound, however, contained charcoal may be because it was nearer to the burning ?activities carried out at B4 or a B1/2 wooden phase.

Layer 5: light brown clayey soil. 23"-27".

GF550.

Layer 5 was the topsoil (OGS) onto which the first layer from the levelling area (layer 4, above) was dumped. Layers 4 & 5 are consequently the OGS during the period immediately prior to the construction of the mound.

Layer 6: Clay with flints subsoil.

No GFs. Undisturbed. Comparable with layer 3, the disturbed clay with flints from B1, 2 & 3.

The sequence should be:

Latest:

Topsoil

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Layer 1 - all Phase 2

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Layer 3 & Layer 2 - all Phase 1. All GFs were dropped during mound- building or came from OGS to W.

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Layer 4 - all Phase 1. All GFs were dropped during mound-building or (more possibly than 2 & 3?) came from OGS to W

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Layer 5 - Phase 1. GF was dropped during mound-building or (more possibly than 2, 3 & 4?) from OGS to W. Dates layer if not contaminants. If layers 4 & 5 are contemporaneous, **GF550** may give a *terminus post quem* for the mound and buildings II & III, and a *terminus ante quem* for House IV?

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Earliest:

Layer 6

Discussion

Phase 1 refers to the period **prior to** and **during** the construction of the mound.

Phase 2 refers to the period **after** the construction of the mound.

The hypothesis is thus; the decision was taken to construct Buildings 2 & 3 (probably with Building 1 or extension south of it) and a level surface on which to build was required (see Cutting 4, p.XX). The OGS to the west, that is layer 4 of the mound, was, naturally, the first to be dug up and was then dumped some 45 feet to the east onto the OGS there (layer 5 of light brown clayey soil). This thick, dark, 'charcoally' layer may well represent the pre-mound occupation layer (the OGS) from the B1 North before its southern extension and/or from a pre-stone timber phase of B2. This layer should allow us the possibility of a *terminus ante quem* for the mound and also, therefore, possibly for those buildings.

In addition, the fact that a layer such as this had the time to form (some 2"-3"), must point to a certain length of occupation at Wroughton Mead prior to the mound building. This shovelled up material was charcoally, possibly from hearth clearance from Building 1 (?pre-south extension phase) or from Building 4, or from the burning down of a pre-stone timber phase to Building 2. Either way, this

layer contained much detritus from the pre-mound phase; charcoal, nails, an awl, several iron objects indicating domestic and agricultural activities, C13th pottery, all from 13th century activity (**GF268**). The OGS onto which it was placed was not, however, similar in make-up, (*i.e.* it contained little charcoal and few sherds) as it was at a distance from the main occupation area.

As levelling continued to the west, so the clay with flint subsoil was reached, and this in turn was carted off and dumped on the burgeoning mound. The redness of the clay the workers had now reached may have given Raddon (Red Down) its name. Below the clay, the natural chalk was cleared down to form a level platform for the building(s). Thus the chalk was the final excavated layer and the final layer to be deposited on the mound. This explains why it is situated below the later humic occupation layer and topsoil, yet above clay with flints and two old ground surfaces. Finds from this chalky core are ones which inevitably became mixed in as the various other layers were also being cut into. This would explain why a Romano-British sherd was uncovered in the later occupation material (**GF373** - layer 1) above medieval ones in the old ground surface (layer 5).

The core of chalk lumps was found to continue well away from the centre of the mound in a north-westerly direction. This is because the mound was gradually becoming elongated towards the area which was being levelled.

Clearly, the stratigraphy of the mound is difficult to elucidate with any clarity due to the method in which it was built. Of note, however, is a sliding lock bolt (**GF411**) of an 11th century date, indicating a structure at Wroughton Mead at this time and possibly on the site of Buildings 2 & 3 (see **GF199**, B1 p. XX). **GF224**, nails type 11 & 12 may indicate rubbish from B2 & 3.

Why charcoal? what sort of activities were going on here in Phase 1? Does this represent the burning down of the pre-stone timber phase of B2?

Is this pre-occupation (pre-medieval)? or contemporary with the earliest phases of WC occupation in the early C12th?

Is it burning of an earlier building on the site of B1, 2 & 3?

Is it clearance from fires in B4?

Was the land cleared of scrub by burning or was the area around B1, 2 & 3 where fires were lit. Hearth area?

Pottery making area? You don't need a kiln to fire pots, could be an 'open' firing area.

Phase 1 'charcoal period' (contemporary with House IV?), then there's a gap (the time it takes to build a c. 2"-3" topsoil) when OGS builds up (grass, charcoal, etc), then area B1, 2 & 3 is dug out for the new abode and barns and modern loo, thus charcoally topsoil is dumped to E., then clay with flints, then chalk subsoil and hence mound is built, and voila, flat, new building area and one mound.