

WC Cutting 9

Excavations between 30/07/62 - 04/08/62. Two cuttings were laid out N-S across a depression some 30' in diameter situated at the SE corner of Wroughton Copse (see Fig. XXX). These cuttings, each 15' long and 4' wide, were staggered as if the central portions of NE and SW quadrants (see Fig. XXX). After both cuttings had been deturfed, work in the northern section revealed a top layer of clay and beneath that a lining of flints which sloped steeply to the south from just below the lip of the hollow. This could represent the lining of a pond.

Soil with small flints at a depth of 7" were prevalent in the N. section from the lip to 4' towards the centre, when larger flints, at 10" in depth, became more apparent for a further 2' towards the centre. In the S. section an area of soil with flint chips extended approximately 7' towards the centre of the pond. In the S., the section drawing reveals a layer of flint-free brown earth at c. 3' covering the sarsens at the bottom of the depression. In the N. section sarsen chips were uncovered at 11" below the turf and when removed showed a layer of clay beneath. These soil layers are the natural in-filling of the depression and were formed by weathering of the bank edge and soil from the area around.

The centre of the depression contained a layer of very fine light brown soil with flint chips in places. At its deepest (at the very bottom of the depression) it was approximately 7' in depth. This was described as 'silt-like', and further indicates that this feature once held water and could therefore have been a pond.

Into this silt-like layer were embedded numerous sarsens stones of great weight. A section to the E. of the northern one was thus opened to allow more room to excavate. This section, 9NE, showed that the sarsens lay in a rough line NE-SW across the bottom of the depression but not across all of it, nor did they cover the whole of the feature's sides. Very few of the sarsens forming this dense packing of weighty stones could be removed by hand, although the few that were eventually removed revealed a possible lining of knapped flints below the sarsens at the probable bottom of the depression.

Discussion

The feature was probably a pond, constructed with a clay lining and a flint bottom, both of which help retain water, and with steep sides. Unfortunately analysis of the metal objects has not been possible, but the ceramic evidence shows the pond was open during a similar period to the main occupation phases of the site. Furthermore, as all the sherds are C13th and came from the clay lining or silt layer, this would indicate that the pond had ceased to be used as a reservoir, probably in the late C13 or early C14th. At this time or at a later, presently unknown date, the pond was partly filled with large sarsens, probably cleared from adjacent land which was being prepared for cultivation.

The deliberate filling of the pond may reflect an important change; the need to maintain a water supply on the site is replaced by the need to clear land, probably for cultivation. Clearly, however, the pond may have been used as a sarsen dump simply because another, less leaky, pond had been dug elsewhere on the site. The remains of a dead animal, possibly a lamb, found during the filling in are probably from a lost or injured creature as the position of the remains did not point to a ritual deposition. A further possibility is that this animal contaminated the water, thus making it undrinkable and consequently making the pond unusable.

GF647 & GF673 in clay, but **GF647** is under Sarsen chips, from B1/2/3? pond used as a dump with rubbish from farmyard (leather, metal)? 14"-15". In clay, so possibly earlier than GFs below, but probably contemporary.

GF674 at 25" in clay possibly be later than **GFs 647 & 673**

GFs 623-27, GF634, GF635 & GF659 = in silt, pond in use, ie holding water? or have sunk into soft silt after being discarded, part of rubbish from farm? 18"-29"

GFs 658, GF676 & GF676 = from clayey soil beneath sarsens. Earliest.

GF numbers & sequence

GF612, C13th sherds. Area 9N, eastern half of cutting in hard clay. Depth; 9".

GF647, 'Leather?'. Pieces of metal. Sherd'. Area 9N, second half of cutting in clay. Depth; 14". Finds 55" from centre. Leather found under sarsen; metal under sarsen chips; sherd from surface of small chips under subsoil.

GF673, 'Sherds. Metal'. Area 9NE, hard, dark clay soil, 10" from NE side. Finds at 15" in depth.

GF623, C13th sherds. Area 9N, eastern half of cutting in silty clay at south end of cutting. 18" in depth.

GF626, C13th sherds; '3 rim pieces'. Area 9S, at 3'10" from centre in clay. 20" in depth.

GF627, '2 wall pieces'. Area 9S, at 3'10" from centre in clay. 20" in depth.

GF634, C13th sherd. Area 9S, in silty clay (as GF626) 40" from centre. 23" in depth.

GF624, C13th sherds. Area 9S, in silty clay 15" from centre of pond, at 25" in depth.

GF635, '5 sherds'. Area 9S, in silty clay 33" from centre. 25" in depth.

GF674, 'Rim sherd. 2 sherds'. Area 9S, dark, hard clay soil, 64" from centre. Finds at 25" in depth.

GF625, 'Sherd'. Area 9S, in silty clay 15" from centre of pond, at 26" in depth.

GF659, 'Sherds'. Area 9S, in darkish silty clay, one sherd 12" from centre, other 20". 29" in depth.

GF676, 'Metal'. Area 9E, clayey soil beneath sarsens.

GF658, 'Metal'. Area 9N, under sarsen rocks beneath thick dark clay.