

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 Map 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 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 layers could well have been formed by weathering of the bank edge and from ploughsoil spill from the fields which surround the depression.

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 'siltlike', and further indicates that this feature once held water and could therefore have been a pond.

Into this siltlike layer were embedded numerous sarsens stones, some of such weight they were impossible to remove manually. 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. The dense packing of this mass of weighty stones meant only a very few could be removed by hand, although this did reveal a possible lining of knapped flints below the sarsens.

Discussion

The main points are that the feature is probably a pond which was constructed with a clay lining and a flint bottom (to help retain water) and with steep sides. The ceramic evidence shows it was open during the medieval period, when it was partly filled with sarsens, probably cleared from adjacent land which was being prepared for arable cultivation. The remains of a dead lamb, buried during the filling in, are probably from a lost or injured creature. The position of the

remains did not point to a ritual deposition. A prehistoric origin cannot be ruled out.

GF647 sherd may date later ploughing/ soil slippage. 14"

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

GF674 at 25" in clay may be later than **GF647** & **673**

GFs623-27, **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"

GFs658, **GF676** & **GF676** = from clayey soil beneath sarsens. Earliest?

GF numbers.

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

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

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

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

GF626, '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, '2 sherds'. Area 9S, in silty clay (as GF626) 40" from centre. 23" in depth.

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

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.

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

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

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

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

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