

EXCAVATIONS AT "THE MERRY FIDDLERS" PUBLIC HOUSE

DA-MF-92

LD PEM AC: DA/166

16/3/92 to 20/3/92

LEVEL III REPORT

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## INTRODUCTION AND METHOD

The excavations at "The Merry Fiddlers" public house were conducted between 16th March and 20th March 1992 by a team from the Passmore Edwards Museum in advance of the redevelopment of the site as a petrol filling station by Lawlor Land Plc. A trench approximately 8 metres by 4 metres, on an east-west orientation, was opened in the car park to the north of the public house. This was excavated by machine and by hand to a depth of 1.4 metres in a sondage at its western end and to a depth of 0.83 metres elsewhere.

The top 0.4 metres was removed by machine revealing many 19th and/or 20th century features. Due to time constraints only some of these features were properly excavated, though all were recorded on context sheets and planned using the single context planning method (the trench was divided into 5 metre grid squares, grid square I being the western 5 metres of the trench and grid square II being the eastern end).

The site was then excavated by machine to a further depth of approximately 0.28 metres until more archaeological features were encountered. These were recorded and excavated. The natural sub-soil into which they were cut was then removed to a depth of 0.58 metres by J.C.B. in a sondage in the west end of the site. The western section of the trench was then drawn and photographed.

#### GROUP DISCUSSION

GROUP 1 :

1-Layer  
I  
2-Layer  
I

1-Layer, dark grey/black tarmac over cream concrete.	15.62m*-15.325m
2-Layer, mid greyish brown sandy silt.	15.415m-15.15m

This group consists of a layer of make-up (2) with concrete laid over it and a surface of tarmac laid over that to provide a surface for the car park of the public house. This group is datable to the mid-late 20th century.

Colour Slide (hereafter C/S) 1: 21 and 22.

Black and White (hereafter B/W) 1: 24 and 25.  
Plan: -  
Section: 1 and 2.  
Phase: IV.

GROUP 2 :

I  
3-Fill  
I  
4-Cut  
I

3-Fill, dark grey sandy silt. 15.1m-14.98m  
4-Cut, linear on east-west orientation, 15.1m-14.98m  
sides: slightly sloping in east, gradual  
but steeper elsewhere, bottom: undulating.

This group consists of a cut and its fill in the north west corner of the trench. The purpose of this feature is uncertain. It may in fact represent a layer filling a depression.

C/S 1: 1, 2, 9, 10, 21 and 22.  
B/W 1: 1, 2, 8, 9, 24 and 25.  
Plan: 4.  
Section: 1 and 2.  
Phase: IV.

\* All levels are measured to metres above Ordnance Datum.

GROUP 3 :

I  
5-Fill  
I  
6-Cut  
I

5-Fill, light greenish yellow sandy silt. 15.14m-14.69m  
6-Cut, linear, north-south orientated, 15.14m-14.69m  
sides: near vertical, bottom: flat,  
sloping slightly from south down to north.

This group represents a north-south orientated drain cut and its fill towards the west of the trench (the fill still contained some in situ drain fragments). The slope of the bottom suggests that the drainage flow was from south to north. The finds date it to the late 19th or early 20th century.

C/S 1: 1, 2, 9, 10, 13 and 14.  
B/W 1: 1, 2, 8, 9, 12 and 13.  
Plan: 6.  
Section: -  
Phase: IV.

GROUP 4 :

I  
16-Fill  
I  
17-Cut  
I

16-Fill, dark yellowish brown sandy clay. 15.08m-14.85m  
17-Cut, linear, west south west-east north 15.08m-14.85m  
east orientaion, sides: near vertical in  
south, steep in north, bottom slopes down  
to north.

This group represents a linear cut with its fill in the north west of the trench. It may be a small drainage or boundary ditch.

C/S 1: 9, 10, 21 and 22.  
B/W 1: 8, 9, 24 and 25.  
Plan: 17.  
Section: 1 and 2.  
Phase: IV.

GROUP 5 :

I  
55-Fill  
I  
56-Cut  
I

55-Fill, dark grey sandy clay. 15.1m-14.66m  
56-Cut, sub circular, steep sides, flat bottom. 15.1m-14.66m

This group consists of a cut and its fill in the north west corner of the site, representing either a rubbish pit or a large post hole.

C/S 1: 21 and 22.  
B/W 1: 24 and 25.  
Plan: 56.  
Section: 2.  
Phase: IV.

GROUP 6 :

I  
18-Fill  
I  
19-Cut  
I

18-Fill, dark greyish brown sandy clay. 15.07m-14.86m  
19-Cut, rounded, truncated by 6 and 17, 15.07m-14.86m

unexcavated (depth measured from cut 6).

This group constitutes a heavily truncated cut with its fill in the north of grid square I. This may be a post hole.

C/S 1: 9 and 10.

B/W 1: 8 and 9.

Plan: 19.

Section: -

Phase: IV.

#### GROUP 7 :

I	I	I	I
53-Fill	7-Fill	9-Fill	20-Fill
I	I	I	I
54-Cut	8-Cut	10-Cut	21-Cut
I	I	I	I
7-Fill, dark greyish brown sandy clay with yellowish grey sandy silt mottling.	15.115m-14.555m		
8-Cut, sub-rectangular; sides: gradual, then near vertical; bottom: shelves from east down to west.	15.115m-14.555m		
9-Fill, mid greyish brown silty clay with orange mottling.	15.14m-14.73m		
10-Cut, sub-squared; sides: near vertical; bottom concave.	15.14m-14.73m		
20-Fill, mid greyish brown silty clay with orange mottling (unexcavated).	15.14m- unexcavated		
21-Cut, sub-rectangular, unexcavated.	15.14m- unexcavated		
53-Fill, mid greyish brown silty clay.	15.095m-14.75m		
54-Cut, sub-rectangular; sides: near vertical; bottom: flat.	15.095m-14.75m		

This group is made up of four sub-rectangular rubbish pits with their fills (cut (8) is filled with (7); cut (10) is filled with (9); cut (21) is filled with (20) and cut (54) is filled with (53) ). The pits form an east west orientated line in the south of grid square I and contain similar fills. They are all cut in to layer (15), and are datable to the 19th or early 20th centuries. The features in this group are the same shape and are on the same alignment as the contexts in groups 8 and 9. They are grouped separately from the group 8 features because the latter are not cut into layer (15), though their fills are similar, and are separate from pit (14), group 9, because it is filled with different material.

C/S 1: 1, 2, 5-8, 21 and 22.

B/W 1: 1, 2, 4-7, 24 and 25.

Plan: 8, 10, 21 and 54.  
 Section: 1.  
 Phase: IV.

GROUP 8 :

I	I
26-Fill	28-Fill
I	I
27-Cut	29-Cut
I	I

26-Fill, mid greyish brown silty clay with orange mottling.	15.12m-unexcavated
27-Cut, sub-rectangular, unexcavated.	15.12m-unexcavated
28-Fill, mid greyish brown silty clay with yellowish orange mottling.	15.09m-unexcavated
29-Cut, sub-rectangular, unexcavated.	15.09m-unexcavated

This group is composed of two similarly filled sub-rectangular cuts with their fills. Cut (27) is filled with (26) and cut (29) is filled with (28). Their dating is uncertain, however, they are both probably rubbish pits and are probably contemporary with the pits in group 7, with which they are in the same linear alignment in the south of the trench.

C/S 1: 1 and 2.  
 B/W 1: 1 and 2.  
 Plan: 27 and 29.  
 Section: -  
 Phase: IV.

GROUP 9 :

I
13-Fill
I
14-Cut
I

13-Fill, light greenish grey clayey silt.	15.13m-14.56m
14-Cut, sub-square; sides: near vertical; bottom: flat.	15.13m-14.56m

This group consists of a squared cut with its fill in the south of grid square I. It is in line with the east-west orientated features in groups 7 and 8 in the south of the trench. This group possibly represents a Victorian cess pit.

C/S 1: 1 and 2.  
 B/W 1: 1 and 2.  
 Plan: 14.  
 Section: -  
 Phase: IV.

GROUP 10 :

I  
47-Fill  
I  
48-Cut  
I

47-Fill, dark greyish brown sandy clay with greyish yellow mottling.	15.05m- unexcavated
48-Cut, sub-squared, unexcavated.	15.05- unexcavated

This group consists of a cut with its fill in the north east of the trench and may constitute a small rubbish pit.

C/S 1: 1 and 2.

B/W 1: 1 and 2.

Plan: 48.

Section: -

Phase: IV.

GROUP 11 :

I  
30-Fill  
I  
31-Cut  
I

30-Fill, dark grey sandy clay.	15.13m- unexcavated
31-Cut, linear on an east-west orientation, squared at its west end, unexcavated.	15.13m- unexcavated

This group consists of a linear cut and its fill in the south east of the trench. It may be the west end of a ditch of uncertain purpose. It post-dates pit (29) in group 8 and is therefore of late 19th century or 20th century date.

C/S 1: 1 and 2.

B/W 1: 1 and 2.

Plan: 31.

Section: -

Phase: IV.



GROUP 12 :

I  
43-Fill  
I  
44-Cut  
I

43-Fill, dark grey sandy clay.	15.06m- unexcavated
44-Cut, kidney shaped, unexcavated.	15.06m- unexcavated

This group consists of a kidney shaped cut and its fill in the eastern part of the trench, possibly of 19th century date. It is uncertain whether this is one feature or more than one as it was not excavated archaeologically.

C/S 1: 1 and 2.  
B/W 1: 1 and 2.  
Plan: 44.  
Section: -  
Phase: IV.

GROUP 13 :

I  
45-Fill  
I  
46-Cut  
I

45-Fill, dark grey sandy clay.	15.06m- unexcavated
46-Cut, ovoid, unexcavated.	15.06m- unexcavated

This group consists of a cut and its fill in the north of grid square II of uncertain date. Its shape and size suggest that it is possibly a post hole.

C/S 1: 1 and 2.  
B/W 1: 1 and 2.  
Plan: 46.  
Section: -  
Phase: IV.

GROUP 14 :

I  
49-Fill  
I  
50-Cut  
I

49-Fill, dark grey sandy clay.	14.98m- unexcavated
50-Cut, ovoid, unexcavated.	14.98m- unexcavated

This group consists of a cut and its fill in the north west of the trench. It represents either a rubbish pit or a large post hole of uncertain date (possibly 19th or 20th century).

C/S 1: 1 and 2.  
B/W 1: 1 and 2.  
Plan: 50.  
Section: -  
Phase: IV.

#### GROUP 15 :

I  
24-Fill  
I  
25-Cut  
I

24-Fill, dark grey sandy clay.	15.07m- unexcavated
25-Cut, ovoid, unexcavated.	15.07- unexcavated

This group consists of an ovoid cut of uncertain purpose with its fill in the north of the trench. It may be a post hole.

C/S 1: 1 and 2.  
B/W 1: 1 and 2.  
Plan: 25.  
Section: -  
Phase: IV.

#### GROUP 16 :

I  
22-Fill  
I  
23-Cut  
I

22-Fill, dark grey sandy clay.	15.11m- unexcavated
23-Cut, ovoid, unexcavated.	15.11m- unexcavated

This group consists of an ovoid cut with its fill in the north of

the trench. It may represent a post hole.

C/S 1: 1 and 2.

B/W 1: 1 and 2.

Plan: 23.

Section: -

Phase: IV.

GROUP 17 :

I  
41-Fill  
I  
42-Cut  
I

41-Fill, dark grey sandy clay.	15.07m- unexcavated
42-Cut, sub-rhomboid, unexcavated.	15.07m- unexcavated

This group consists of a cut with its fill in grid square II, of uncertain purpose.

C/S 1: 1 and 2.

B/W 1: 1 and 2.

Plan: 42.

Section: -

Phase: IV.

GROUP 18 :

I  
11-Fill  
I  
12-Cut  
I

11-Fill, dark greyish brown sandy clay with yellowish grey silt mottling.	15.13m- unexcavated
12-Cut, sub-rectangular, unexcavated.	15.13m- unexcavated

This group consists of a sub-rectangular cut with its fill in the south of grid square I. Its purpose is uncertain.

C/S 1: 1 and 2.

B/W 1: 1 and 2.

Plan: 12.

Section: -

Phase: IV.

GROUP 19 :

I  
15-Layer  
I

15-Layer, dark yellowish brown sandy clay. 15.14m-14.83m

This group consists of layer (15) which constitutes a layer of dumped material in the south west of the trench, of 19th century date.

C/S1: 1, 2, 5-12, 21 and 22.

B/W1: 1, 2, 4-11, 24 and 25.

Plan: 15 (I and II).

Section: 1.

Phase: IV.

#### GROUP 20 :

I  
40-Layer  
I  
38-Layer  
I

40-Layer, yellowish brown sandy clay. 15.105m-14.89m

38-Layer, light yellowish brown sandy clay. 14.925m-14.82m

This group consists of two layers of build-up across the site, beneath the 19th century layers and features. It is possible that they represent two layers of plough soil, as the tops of the features beneath (ie. the features of groups 21-24) seem to have been truncated or disturbed on top.

C/S 1: 9-14, 21 and 22.

B/W 1: 8-13, 24 and 25.

Plan: -

Section: 1 and 2.

Phase: III.

#### GROUP 21 :

I  
51-Fill  
I  
52-Cut  
I

51-Fill, yellowish brown silt. 14.78m-14.71m

52-Cut, circular, sides and bottom concave. 14.78m-14.71m

This group represents a cut with its fill in the middle of grid square I, heavily truncated by cut (6). As it only appears as a 0.06m deep scoop it can be deduced that the top has been removed, probably by ploughing. Its size suggests that it is probably a post hole.

C/S 1: -

B/W 1: -

Plan: 52.

Section: -

Phase: II.

GROUP 22 :

I  
34-Fill  
I  
35-Cut  
I

34-Fill, mid-light grey silt.	14.8m-14.75m
35-Cut, oval, sides and bottom concave.	14.8m-14.75m

This group consists of a cut with its fill in the west of the trench, probably representing a post hole. Only the bottom remains, suggesting that the top has been removed by ploughing.

C/S 1: 17 and 18.  
B/W 1: 16 and 17.  
Plan: 35.  
Section: -  
Phase: II.

GROUP 23 :

I  
32-Fill  
I  
33-Cut  
I

32-Fill, mid grey silt.	14.79m-14.665m
33-Cut, sub-rectangular; sides: near vertical in north, steep in east and west, steep but more gradual in south; bottom, flat with a small circular scoop towards the north.	14.79m-14.665m

This group consists of a cut with its fill in the north west of the trench. It probably represents the bottom of a post hole (the scoop in the bottom of the feature probably represents the post pipe).

C/S 1: 15 and 16.  
B/W 1: 14 and 15.  
Plan :33.  
Section: -  
Phase: II.

GROUP 24 :

I  
36-Fill  
I  
37-Cut  
I

36-Fill, mid-light grey silt.	14.8m-14.74m
-------------------------------	--------------

37-Cut, circular; sides, steep; bottom, 14.8m-14.74m  
concave.

This group represents the cut and fill of a stake hole in the west of the site. The top has been removed, possibly by ploughing.

C/S 1: 19 and 20.

B/W 1: 18 and 19.

Plan: 37.

Section: -

Phase: II.

GROUP 25 :

I  
39-Layer  
I

39-Layer, light yellowish grey-light yellowish 14.815m-14.245m  
orange sandy clay interlensed with  
grey-orange gravel.

This group consists of water deposited natural subsoils consisting of sandy clay interlensed with gravel, across the trench. It was excavated to depth of 0.57 metres in the sondage at the western end of the trench.

C/S 1: 15-22.

B/W 1: 14-19, 24 and 25.

Plan: -

Section: 1 and 2.

Phase: I

## PHASING DISCUSSION

The archaeological evidence points to there being four distinct phases on the site.

### PHASE I :

This phase consists of group 25 and constitutes the natural subsoil on the site, of sandy clay interlensed with gravel.

### PHASE II :

This phase is composed of groups 21, 22, 23 and 24. It represents the earliest phase of activity found on the site and takes the form of three post holes and a stake hole in the west of the trench. Some of these features may be part of the same structure, or structures, however, they bare no obvious relationship to one another (they may merely have been fence posts). There was no dating evidence found in these features and only the bottom of the original holes remain (the tops of the features were probably removed by ploughing after the structures of which they were part were demolished).

### PHASE III :

This phase represents two layers of possible plough soil (38 and 40, group 20) which built up over and truncated the features in phase II. The later of these layers (40) contained a post-medieval pot base datable to between c.1600 and c.1800, which helps to date this phase approximately to the early 19th century at the latest.

### PHASE IV :

This phase represents the 19th and 20th century activity on the site. This consisted of the dumping of material in the south west of the trench (context (15), group 19) and the subsequent digging of many post holes and rubbish pits across the whole trench. From the size of the area excavated no pattern can be distinguished from these holes except that a line of rectangular rubbish pits appears on an east west orientation in the south of the trench (groups 7 and 8) which also includes a possible cess pit (group 9). As well as these pits there was a series of post holes and/or rubbish pits described in groups 5, 6, 10, 12, 13,

14, 15, 16, 17 and 18. Three linear ditches were also found in this phase, an east-west orientated ditch in the east of the site (group 11) of uncertain purpose; a west south west-east north

east orientated ditch in the north west of the site of uncertain purpose (group 4) and a north-south orientated drain pipe trench (group 3), which is later than group 4. A layer or shallow ditch end was found in the north west of the site (group 2). The latest activity in this phase consisted of the depositing of a layer of make-up the and the laying of concrete and tarmac to form the surface of the public house car park in the mid-late 20th century (group 1).

## INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION





	I		I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I
	4		I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I
	I		I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I
	5		I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I
	I		I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	30	I
	6		I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I
	I		I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	31	I
I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I
I	I	I	53	7	9	20	13	I	I	47	I	I	26	28
I	16	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I
I	I	I	54	8	10	21	14	I	I	48	I	I	27	29
I	17	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I
I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I
55	18	I	I	I	11	I	I	24	22	43	41	45	I	49
I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I
56	19	I	I	I	12	I	I	25	23	44	42	46	I	50
I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I
I	I			I				I	I	I	I	I	I	I
I	I			15				I	I	I	I	I	I	I
I	I			I				I	I	I	I	I	I	I

				I										
				I										
				I										
Phase	III			I										
				40										
				I										
				38										
				I										
Phase	II			I										
				I		I		I		I				
				51		32		34		36				
				I		I		I		I				
				52		33		35		37				
				I		I		I		I				
				I				I						
				I				I						
				I				I						
Phase	I			I				I						
				39										

# CONTEXT INDEX

Context	Description	Grid	Group	Phase	Ins & Date
1	Layer	I, II	1	IV	K.S. 16/3/92
2	Layer	I, II	1	IV	K.S. 16/3/92
3	Fill (of 4)	I	2	IV	K.S. 16/3/92
4	Cut	I	2	IV	K.S. 16/3/92
5	Fill (of 6)	I	3	IV	K.S. 16/3/92
6	Cut	I	3	IV	K.S. 16/3/92

7	Fill (of 8)	I	7	IV	M.B. 17/3/92
8	Cut	I	7	IV	M.B. 18/3/92
9	Fill (of 10)	I	7	IV	M.B. 18/3/92
10	Cut	I	7	IV	M.B. 18/3/92
11	Fill (of 12)	I	18	IV	K.S. 18/3/92
12	Cut	I	18	IV	K.S. 18/3/92
13	Fill (of 14)	I	9	IV	K.S. 18/3/92
14	Cut	I	9	IV	K.S. 18/3/92
15	Layer	I, II	19	IV	K.S. 18/3/92
16	Fill (of 17)	I	4	IV	K.S. 18/3/92
17	Cut	I	4	IV	K.S. 18/3/92
18	Fill (of 19)	I	6	IV	K.S. 18/3/92
19	Cut	I	6	IV	K.S. 18/3/92
20	Fill (of 21)	I	7	IV	K.S. 27/3/92
21	Cut	I	7	IV	K.S. 27/3/92
22	Fill (of 23)	I	16	IV	K.S. 27/3/92
23	Cut	I	16	IV	K.S. 27/3/92
24	Fill (of 25)	I	15	IV	K.S. 27/3/92

Context	Description	Grid	Group	Phase	Ins & Date
25	Cut	I	15	IV	K.S. 27/3/92
26	Fill (of 27)	II	8	IV	K.S. 27/3/92
27	Cut	II	8	IV	K.S. 27/3/92
28	Fill (of 29)	II	8	IV	K.S. 27/3/92
29	Cut	II	8	IV	K.S. 27/3/92
30	Fill (of 31)	II	11	IV	K.S. 27/3/92
31	Cut	II	11	IV	K.S. 27/3/92
32	Fill (of 33)	I	23	II	M.B. 19/3/92
33	Cut	I	23	II	M.B. 19/3/92
34	Fill (of 35)	I	22	II	M.B. 19/3/92

35	Cut	I	22	II	M.B. 19/3/92
36	Fill (of 37)	I	24	II	M.B. 19/3/92
37	Cut	I	24	II	M.B. 19/3/92
38	Layer	I, II	20	III	M.B. 19/3/92
39	Layer	I, II	25	I	M.B. 19/3/92
40	Layer	I, II	20	III	M.B. 19/3/92
41	Fill (of 42)	II	17	IV	K.S. 19/3/92
42	Cut	II	17	IV	K.S. 19/3/92
43	Fill (of 44)	II	12	IV	K.S. 19/3/92
44	Cut	II	12	IV	K.S. 19/3/92
45	Fill (of 46)	II	13	IV	K.S. 19/3/92
46	Cut	II	13	IV	K.S. 19/3/92
47	Fill (of 48)	II	10	IV	K.S. 19/3/92
48	Cut	II	10	IV	K.S. 19/3/92
49	Fill (of 50)	II	14	IV	K.S. 19/3/92

Context	Description	Grid	Group	Phase	Ins & Date
50	Cut	II	14	IV	K.S. 19/3/92
51	Fill (of 52)	I	21	II	K.S. 19/3/92
52	Cut	I	21	II	K.S. 19/3/92
53	Fill (of 54)	I	7	IV	K.S. 19/3/92
54	Cut	I	7	IV	K.S. 19/3/92
55	Fill (of 56)	I	5	IV	K.S. 19/3/92
56	Cut	I	5	IV	K.S. 19/3/92

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