

Test-Pit 58: Woodland at Bosworth Hall, Park Street (SK 40815 03121)

Test-pit 58 was excavated in woodland in the grounds of Bosworth Hall c.15m north-east of Park Street at SK 40815 03121 (Figure 1). Over two days on 6-7 July 2019, the test-pit was dug to a depth of c.0.6m with six spits recorded.



Figure 1: Excavation of Test-pit 58, looking west.



Figure 2: Test-pit 58 post-excavation, looking north.

During the excavation, c.0.1m of woodland loam covering hardcore and geopermeable membrane (the buried remains of a gravel surface – Spit 1) was removed. Beneath was c.0.4m of dark greyish-brown silty-sand topsoil (Spits 2-5) covering c.0.1m of mottled grey/orange silty-sand subsoil (Spit 6). The natural substratum,

greyish-yellow clayey-sand, was reached c.0.6m below ground level. No other archaeological deposits or features were observed (Figure 2).

In all, 46 individual finds (909g) were recovered from the test-pit (Table 1). Post-medieval and modern material was found throughout the test-pit and it was evident that the ground here was extensively reworked in the past. The loam (Spit 1) contained a small quantity of modern brick and concrete, and a single shard of modern bottle glass. A small quantity of modern brick and concrete was also found throughout topsoil (Spits 2-5), as well as 9 sherds of modern and post-medieval pottery, including china, creamware, earthenware and stoneware (c.1500-present). A small quantity of medieval pottery was also present (Figure 3), including 1 sherd of reduced sandy ware (c.850-1400), 3 sherds of Potters Marston ware (c.1100-1400), 1 sherd of Chilvers Cotton A Ware (c.1250-1395) and 8 sherds of Chilvers Cotton B Ware (c.1250-1400). Other finds from the topsoil included 2 shards of modern bottle glass, a corroded iron object probably part of a nail, a piece of iron slag and a small quantity of animal bone including several horse teeth.



Figure 3: Medieval pottery from Test-pit 58.

Finds of different periods, ranging from AD c.850 – present were together in the topsoil suggesting that it was repeatedly mixed and reworked over an extended period. The finds do not suggest occupation in the immediate vicinity of the test-pit. Instead, the small quantity of medieval pottery and animal bone is more characteristic of material being used to enrich soil through manuring fields with domestic waste brought in from elsewhere. Much of the pottery was small and very abraded, suggesting it was circulating in the soil for a prolonged period. This is also characteristic of material deposited in an arable context, which has been repeatedly turned over by the plough. The relative absence of later material in the topsoil is also in keeping with the area, which is within Bosworth Park. The park, part of the Bosworth Hall estate, dates to at least the 17th century when the Hall was built but is probably much older, potentially part of the medieval Southwood Park, a deer park first mentioned in the early 13th century. From the 17th century on, it was probably permanent grassland and there was no opportunity or need to enrich the soil with domestic waste. Modern finds of glass and china probably represent opportunistic refuse disposal within the corner of the park closest to the town.

Table 1: Catalogue of finds from Test-Pit 58.

Test-pit	Spit	Material*	No.	Description	Date**	Notes
58	1	BM	1	Concrete	Modern	
58	1	CBM	1	Reddish orange CBM	Modern	
58	1	Glass	1	Brown curved glass	Modern	Neck of bottle
58	2	CBM	2	Reddish orange CBM	Modern	
58	3	CBM	4	Reddish orange CBM	Modern	
58	3	CBM	1	Purplish blue brick	Modern	Corner of brick
58	3	Glass	1	Pale green/blue curved glass	Modern	Base of bottle, stamped 'N & _' and '1153'
58	3	Pot	2	Cream ware	Modern	
58	3	Pot	2	China/porcelain	Modern	
58	3	Pot	2	Earthenware 2	later Post-medieval	
58	3	Pot	1	Earthenware 1	early Post-medieval	
58	4	Bone	1	Misc animal bone	Unknown	
58	4	Glass	1	Clear curved glass	Modern	
58	4	Metalwork	1	Fe object	Unknown	Probably nail fragment
58	4	Pot	1	China/porcelain	Modern	
58	4	Pot	1	Earthenware – unclassified	Modern	
58	4	Pot	2	Potters Marston ware	early High medieval	Rim with thumb-impressed decoration
58	4	Pot	2	Chilvers Coton B ware	later High medieval	
58	4	Pot	1	Reduced sandy ware	Saxo-Norman/early High Medieval	
58	5	Bone	6	Misc animal bone	Unknown	Inc. horse teeth
58	5	CBM	2	Reddish orange CBM	Modern	
58	5	Industrial	1	Slag	Unknown	
58	5	Pot	1	Chilvers Coton A ware	later High medieval	Rim
58	5	Pot	1	Potters Marston ware	early High medieval	
58	5	Pot	6	Chilvers Coton B ware	later High medieval	
58	5	Pot	1	Brown salt glazed stoneware	later Post-medieval/modern	

*BM – Building Material, CBM – Ceramic Building Material

**The following phasing is used in this report: Saxo-Norman (AD 850-1100), early High Medieval (AD 1100-1250), later High Medieval (AD 1250-1400), Late Medieval (AD 1375-1550), early Post-medieval (AD 1500-1650), later Post-medieval (AD 1650-1850), Modern (AD 1850-present).