



Test Pit 19: The Gate Hangs Well, Barton Road, SK 40101 05250

Test Pit 19 (Figure 1) was excavated in the beer garden to the south of the Gate Hangs Well public house on the east side of Barton Road. The public house was built in the late 19th century, replacing an earlier building known as the 'Hoop Hall', an inn dating back to at least the mid-18th century and may be much earlier.



Figure 1: Test Pit 19 during excavation. Looking north-east



Figure 2: Test Pit 19 fully excavated, looking north

During the excavation, 0.1m of turf and brownish grey sandy silty topsoil (Layer 1) was removed (Figure 2). Beneath was 0.2m of ‘Type 1’ aggregate (Layers 2-3), 0.1m of dark brownish grey clayey silt and hearth waste (i.e. ash and charcoal, Layer 4) and 0.2m of greyish orange clayey sand (Layers 5-6). The natural substratum, greyish yellow clayey sand, was reached 0.6m below the ground. This sequence of distinct layers appeared to represent a modern topsoil covering an aggregate surface, probably formerly the pub yard/car park. The dark soil and the clayey sand beneath (Layers 4-6) likely represent the topsoil and subsoil pre-dating the late 19th century building.

In all, 280 individual finds (2.482kg) were recovered from the test pit (Table 1). Modern pottery (19th century), building material (brick, tile and asphalt and part of a hinge), window and bottle glass and plastic rubbish were all recovered from the upper 0.3m of the test pit. These finds can all be associated with the site’s current function as a public house. Post-medieval and modern pottery (17th-19th century) was recovered from the lower 0.3m of the test pit. Other finds included fragments of handmade brick, pantile and nib tile, probably made locally from the late 18th century onwards. A handmade iron nail, pieces of clay tobacco pipe, and modern window and bottle glass were also present. A piece of stuck flint from the lowest layer was possibly of prehistoric date.

The test pit was sited to assess the potential for activity in the area around the junction of Barton Road, Bosworth Road and Main Street, known today as Carlton Gate, and particularly activity associated with the Gate Hangs Well and the Hoop Hall. Most of the finds from the test pit can be best associated with the construction and operation of the Gate Hangs Well public house from the late 19th-century onwards. However, post-medieval pottery mostly pre-dates the construction of the pub and indicates that there was activity in the vicinity in the 17th and 18th centuries. This is most likely associated with the Hoop Hall but was not of sufficient quantity to provide further insights into this building, which was probably sited to the north of the Gate Hangs Well. No activity pre-dating the 17th century was found and on present evidence, it does not appear that there was medieval habitation in the vicinity. However, given the extensive disturbance in the test pit from 19th/20th century yard surfaces, this may not be the complete picture.

The struck irregular chunk of flint was debitage, a flake removed during tool manufacture and maintenance. It may represent a low-level ‘background noise’ of prehistoric activity in the wider landscape.

Many thanks to Dawn and James Igoe for the test pit location. Excavation was carried out over two days on September 10-11, 2022 by Jacob Barrs, Simon Dodd and Wendy Wallace.

Table 1: The finds from Test Pit 19

Layer	Category	No	Description	Phase*	Comments
1	Building material	1	Asphalt	Modern	
1	Building material	25	Red ceramic building material	Modern	Includes fragments of handmade brick, pantile and nib tile, probably made locally from late 18th century onwards
1	Building material	1	Iron strap	Modern	50mm wide and 3mm thick, broken, 10mm hole in centre, probably part of a hinge leaf
1	Garden waste	11	Modern plastic	Modern	Includes sweet wrappers, broken plant pots and a plant label for <i>Hypericum Polphyllum Grandiflorum</i>
1	Glass	14	Clear bottle glass	Modern	

Layer	Category	No	Description	Phase*	Comments
1	Glass	1	Clear window glass	Modern	Privacy glass
1	Glass	1	Green bottle glass	Modern	
1	Pottery	1	English Brown Salt-Glazed Stoneware	Post-medieval	Staffordshire AD 1670-1900
1	Pottery	10	Modern earthenwares	Modern	AD 1800+
2	Building material	4	Asphalt	Modern	
2	Building material	10	Red ceramic building material	Modern	
2	Garden waste	1	Black rubber	Modern	
2	Glass	2	Clear bottle glass	Modern	
2	Pottery	1	Modern earthenwares	Modern	AD 1800+
3	Building material	1	Red ceramic building material	Modern	
3	Clay pipe	1	Clay tobacco pipe stem fragment	Modern	2.4mm bore
3	Glass	1	Clear bottle glass	Modern	
4	Bone & shell	2	Misc. animal bone	Undated	
4	Building material	1	Cement	Modern	
4	Building material	63	Red ceramic building material	Modern	
4	Building material	1	Iron nail	Undated	Handmade, square shafted
4	Clay pipe	3	Clay tobacco pipe stem fragment	Modern	1.6mm bore
4	Clay pipe	1	Clay tobacco pipe bowl fragment	Modern	
4	Glass	31	Clear bottle glass	Modern	
4	Glass	1	Clear window glass	Modern	Privacy glass
4	Glass	4	Brown bottle glass	Modern	
4	Pottery	1	Unclassified post-medieval earthenware	Post-medieval	AD 1550+
4	Pottery	2	Iron-Glazed Earthenware	Post-medieval	Chilvers Coton / Ticknall 17th-19th century AD
4	Pottery	31	Modern earthenwares	Modern	AD 1800+
5	Building material	2	Cement	Modern	
5	Building material	29	Red ceramic building material	Modern	
5	Clay pipe	2	Clay tobacco pipe stem fragment	Modern	1.6mm bore, stem stamped '480'

Layer	Category	No	Description	Phase*	Comments
5	Glass	3	Clear bottle glass	Modern	
5	Glass	3	Clear window glass	Modern	
5	Pottery	2	Iron-Glazed Earthenware	Post-medieval	Chilvers Coton / Ticknall 17th-19th century AD
5	Pottery	1	White Salt-Glazed Stoneware	Post-medieval	Staffordshire AD 1730-1770
5	Pottery	4	Modern earthenwares	Modern	AD 1800+
6	Building material	5	Red ceramic building material	Modern	
6	Flint	1	Irregular struck chunk	Bronze Age	
6	Pottery	1	Staffordshire Slipware	Post-medieval	AD 1680-1750

* Phasing: Bronze Age (2600-700 BC), Roman (AD 43-410), High Medieval (1100-1400), Later Medieval (1400-1550), Post-medieval (1550-1800), Modern (1800-present)