

The Stratigraphic Report

Cobi Gottschalk

Student # 833759

Archaeological Field Skills

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Abstract:

The purpose of excavating Trench 70 ditch [70007] is to determine the type of archaeological material that lies within the soil deposits. A team of four LJMU students excavated this area using various field techniques and such as trowelling, using the mattock, shovelling, etc. Soil contexts were documented and measurements of the cut were taken to create a sketch of the ditch. A substantial number of material related to human activity was found within the two different soil contexts. Based off the overall findings from the excavation, it appears that humans participated in cooking activities in and around the area. The excavation of this ditch within trench seventy has increased archaeologists understanding of the Poulton area.

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Project Details Summary Table:

Project	Poulton Research Project
Excavation Director	Kevin Cootes
Site Director	Dr. Richard Jennings
Townsland	Poulton
County	Gloucestershire
Site Name	Poulton
Site Type	Medieval/ Neolithic
Trench	70
Ditch	[70007]
Report By	Cobi Gottschalk
Report Date	17/05/2019

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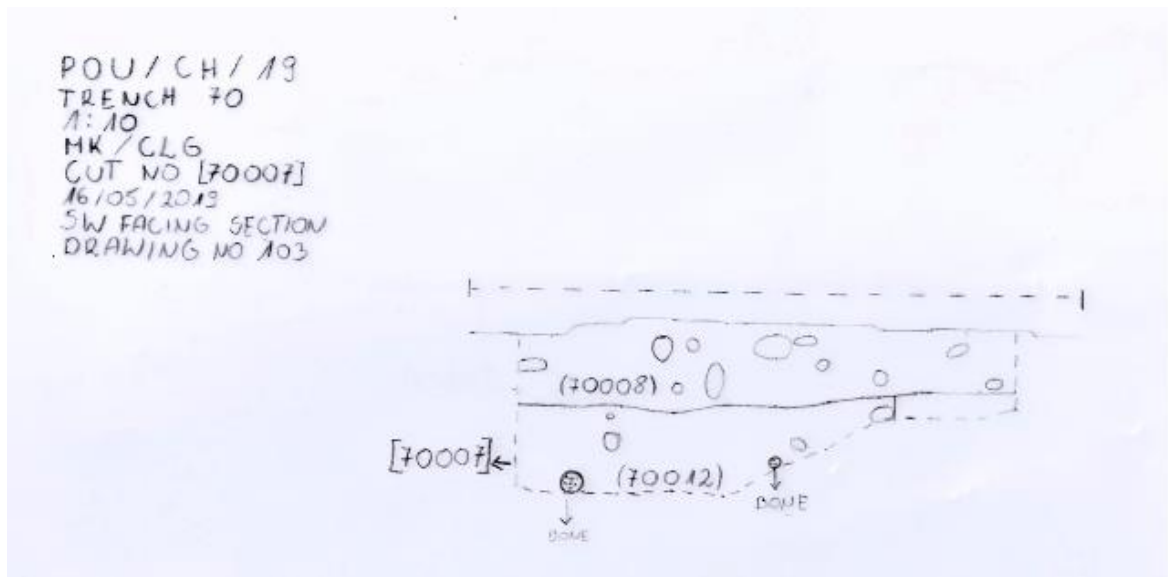
Table 1.1 Observations of the soil contexts within cut [70007]

1 Introduction:

Poulton is an English county of Gloucestershire located just five miles south of Chester. There is currently ongoing archaeological excavations here due to the extensive amount of evidence for human activity found in this area, some of which dates back to ten thousand years ago (Poulton Research Project, 2019). Many of the deposits here consist of Roman ditches, a medieval chapel, industrial structures and so on. The site itself sits on a low plateau and contains glacial deposits as part of the landscape's natural soil (Jordan, 2019). The site was first discovered when looking for the Cistercian Abbey decades before excavations began in 1995 (Emery, 2002). Since then, remnants of a chapel and over eight hundred burials have been excavated. Prior to archaeological excavation, the area has been cereal cultivated for agricultural purposes over a long period of time. Therefore, the upper twenty-five to thirty centimeters of the landscape profile has been subjected to repeated ploughing making it an Ap horizon classification (Jordan, 2019). The specific aims for the week at Poulton was to excavate a section within trench seventy and find out what material laid beneath the soil deposits.

2 Methodology:

Trench seventy was first cleaned and smoothed using trowels, spades, and buckets. The spill was scooped up with the spade and placed into a bucket, which was then carried over to a pile of removed soil near the excavation. Once this was cleaned, excavation of ditch [70007] began. A mattock was used to take the soil down to a lower level. Each time the mattock was used, the sides were scraped with the trowel to make sure the walls of the cut were straight. Spill was placed into the bucket and the spoils were sifted through before being placed into the pile of removed soil. All archaeological finds were placed into two trays. One for soil context (70008) and another for (70012). After reaching and cleaning the two different soil contexts of the ditch, a sketch was drawn using measurements taken from a thread line and measuring tape. Photos were taken using a camera, description board, and measuring rods.

Figure 1.1 Sketch of cut [70007].

3 Excavation Results:

Results showed that there was evidence of archaeological material within this part of the trench. The items found consisted of heating stones, charcoal, ceramics, and animal bones. In soil context eight there were minute amounts of charcoal, a small piece of bone, moderately stony, and a black burnish wear ceramic. In soil context twelve there consisted of more charcoal, bigger pieces of bone, and twenty to sixty millimeter medium stones. The color of the soil from context eight was a dark yellowish brown with a clay loam texture. The color was a dark yellowish brown and the texture was sticky plastic.

Figure 1.2 Piece of ceramic.**Figure 1.3 Material found from ditch.**

Table 1.1 Observations of the soil contexts within cut [70007].

Cut [70007]	
Soil Context (70008)	Soil Context (70012)
Observations: <i>Color-</i> Mid Dark Yellowish Grey <i>Texture-</i> Sandy Clay Loam <i>Consistency-</i> Firm Sticky Plastic	Observations: <i>Color-</i> Dark Yellowish Brown <i>Texture-</i> Clay Loam <i>Consistency-</i> Sticky Plastic

4 Discussion:

These findings of fractured stones, bone, charcoal, and ceramic suggest that there has been human activity in ditch [70007] of trench seventy. When combining all of the different elements such as fractured stones, bone, and ceramic pieces that were found, it seems likely that humans were cooking food in or around this area. Fire-affected or fire-cracked rocks in archaeology are any rocks that have been split or altered due to using a fire to heat them. This could be done for a number of reasons, but a common one was to heat or boil water. Heated stones could be placed into water fillable containers made out of animal skin or ceramics. In Britain, these type of fractured rocks are called pot-boilers which is what the stones found in ditch [70007] are likely to be (Akins, 1985).

5 Conclusion:

The excavation of trench seventy ditch [70007] has produced and contributed to the already substantial amount of evidence for human activity found at Poulton. The presence and combination of the different materials found within the ditch gives reason to believe that humans were cooking in the area. While these finds provide more insight to the activity that went on here in the past, ditch [70007] of trench seventy would have to be excavated further

to have a better idea of the other archaeological material that lies beneath the soil context excavated.

Acknowledgements:

Thank you to Kevin Cootes, the Poulton Project, and Liverpool John Moores University faculty for providing the opportunity to learn and contribute to the ongoing excavations at this archaeological site.

Bibliography:

Akins, Nancy (1985). Fire-cracked Rock. In the Excavation of the Cortez Co2 Pipe Project Sites, 1982-1983. pp.173-178.

Emery, Mike (July 2002). "Poulton: the search for a lost Cistercian abbey". *Current Archaeology* (180): 520–525.

Jordan, David (2019). The Geoarchaeology of Poulton.

Poulton Research Project. (2019). *Training Courses at Poulton, Cheshire 2019 - Poulton Research Project*. [online] Available at: <http://www.poultonresearchproject.co.uk/training-courses-poulton-cheshire-2019/> [Accessed 17 May 2019].

Photographs:

Figure 1.4 Close up of roman ditch with scale.



Figure 1.5 Pre-excavation of roman ditch with scale.



Figure 1.6 Close up excavation of roman ditch with board and scale.



Figure 1.7 Close up excavation photo without board and scale.



Figure 1.8 Pre-excavation of roman ditch without scale.



Appendix

Appendix 1-

Table 1.2 Archive Index

Project: Stratigraphic Report of Roman Ditch		
Site Name: Poulton		
Excavation Director: Kevin Cootes		
Site director: Dr. Richard Jennings		
Field Records	Items	Comments
Section Drawing	1	
Soil Contexts	2	
Digital Photographs	7	
Skeleton Sheets	0	
Context Sheets	5	
Stone Structural Drawings	0	
Timber Drawings	0	

Appendix 2-

Figure 1.9 Context (70002)

Context Record – Fill/Layer									
Co-ordinates: <i>N/A</i>	Site Code: <i>POU/CHF/19</i>	Trench No: <i>LXX</i>	Context No: <i>(70002)</i>						
Length: <i>N/A</i>	Width: <i>N/A</i>	Diameter: <i>N/A</i>	Thickness (max/min): <i>14cm 11mm</i>						
Colour (Visual): <i>DAKE-GREYISH BROWN</i>	Texture (e.g. silty-clay): <i>SANDY CLAY LOAM</i>	Consistency (e.g. soft/firm/plastic): <i>PLASTIC</i>							
Coarse components (if and approx. size in mm): <i>1-5% SLIGHTLY STONY PEBBLES (6-20mm) ROUNDED / SPHEROIDAL</i>									
Description: <i>SUB SOIL</i> 1. Extent: <i>ACROSS ENTIRE SITE</i> 2. Relationship to other features: <i>BELOW TOP SOIL (70001), ABOVE TOP FILL OF (70003) (70004)</i> 3. Distribution of other components/finde: <i>RANDOM</i> 4. Waterlogging: <i>NO</i> 5. Preservation of organics: <i>N/A</i> 6. Method of excavation: <i>FLAT BUCKET</i>									
(cont'd overleaf)									
Stratigraphic relationships		Stratigraphic Matrix							
Below:	<input type="checkbox"/> (70001) <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>								
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Same as:	This Context <input type="checkbox"/> (70001)								
Above:	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>								
Fill of:	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>								
Interpretation (with reasons): 1. Date of deposition 2. Circumstances of deposition 3. Origin 4. Function		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>							
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Finds:		Other finds (specify)							
None <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CE <input type="checkbox"/> A Bone <input type="checkbox"/> Clay Pipe <input type="checkbox"/> Glass <input type="checkbox"/> Iron <input type="checkbox"/> Other Metal <input type="checkbox"/> Wood <input type="checkbox"/> Leather <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic <input type="checkbox"/> B.M. <input type="checkbox"/> H Bone <input type="checkbox"/> Flint <input type="checkbox"/> Plaster <input type="checkbox"/> Coin <input type="checkbox"/> Slag <input type="checkbox"/> Shell <input type="checkbox"/>									
Small Find No:		Sample No:							
Plan No:		Section No:							
Photos (Digital):									
Recorded by: <i>KW</i>		Date: <i>16.05.19</i>		Checked by: <i></i>		Date: <i></i>			

Figure 2.1 Context (70001)

Context Record – Fill/Layer									
Co-ordinates: <i>N/A</i>	Site Code: <i>POU/CHF/19</i>	Trench No: <i>LXX</i>	Context No: <i>(70001)</i>						
Length: <i>N/A</i>	Width: <i>N/A</i>	Diameter: <i>N/A</i>	Thickness (max/min): <i>14cm 11mm</i>						
Colour (Visual): <i>MID-GREYISH BROWN</i>	Texture (e.g. silty-clay): <i>SANDY CLAY LOAM</i>	Consistency (e.g. soft/firm/plastic): <i>PLASTIC</i>							
Coarse components (if and approx. size in mm): <i>1-5% SLIGHTLY STONY GRAVEL-PEBBLES (2-30mm) ROUNDED / SPHEROIDAL</i>									
Description: <i>TOP SOIL</i> 1. Extent: <i>ACROSS ENTIRE SITE</i> 2. Relationship to other features: <i>ABOVE SUBSOIL (70002)</i> 3. Distribution of other components/finde: <i>RANDOM</i> 4. Waterlogging: <i>NO</i> 5. Preservation of organics: <i>N/A</i> 6. Method of excavation: <i>FLAT BUCKET</i>									
(cont'd overleaf)									
Stratigraphic relationships		Stratigraphic Matrix							
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Interpretation (with reasons): 1. Date of deposition 2. Circumstances of deposition 3. Origin 4. Function		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>							
(cont'd overleaf)									
Finds:		Other finds (specify)							
None <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CE <input type="checkbox"/> A Bone <input type="checkbox"/> Clay Pipe <input type="checkbox"/> Glass <input type="checkbox"/> Iron <input type="checkbox"/> Other Metal <input type="checkbox"/> Wood <input type="checkbox"/> Leather <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic <input type="checkbox"/> B.M. <input type="checkbox"/> H Bone <input type="checkbox"/> Flint <input type="checkbox"/> Plaster <input type="checkbox"/> Coin <input type="checkbox"/> Slag <input type="checkbox"/> Shell <input type="checkbox"/>									
Small Find No:		Sample No:							
Plan No:		Section No:							
Photos (Digital):									
Recorded by: <i>KW</i>		Date: <i>16.05.19</i>		Checked by: <i></i>		Date: <i></i>			

Figure 2.2 Context (70008)

Context Record – Fill/Layer

Co-ordinates: Site Code: POU/CHF/19 Trench No: LXX (18V) Context No: (70008)

Length: 97cm Width: 16cm Diameter: 1mm BGM 8000 19cm

Colour (visual): MD = DARK YELLOWISH GREY Texture (e.g. silt/clay): SANDY CLAY LOAM Consistency (e.g. silt/clay): FIRM, STICKY PLASTIC

Coarse components (5% and approx. size in mm): SLIGHTLY TO MODERATELY STONY (16-35%) 20-60mm (MEDIUM STONES) SUB-ANGULAR - SUB-ROUNDED

Description:

1. Extent: 31m x 12cm
2. Relationship to other features: BELOW SUB SOL (70009)
3. Distribution of other components/flats: RANDOM
4. Weathering: NO
5. Preservation of organic: OAD
6. Method of excavation: MATTOCK + TROWL

(cont'd overleaf)

Stratigraphic relationships

Below: 70001

Cut by:

Same as: This Context

Above: 70007

Fill of: 70007

Interpretation (with reasons):

1. Date of deposition: Possible roman d/t
2. Circumstances of deposition: Possible roman d/t
3. Origin: Domestic waste
4. Function: Midden

(cont'd overleaf)

Find:

None ☐ CE ☒ A Bone ☒ Clay Pipe ☐ Glass ☐ Iron ☐ Other Metal ☐ Wood ☐ Leather ☐

Plastic ☐ B.M. ☐ H Bone ☐ Flint ☐ Plaster ☐ Coin ☐ Slag ☐ Shell ☐

Other finds (specify): CHARCOAL, HEAT AFFECTED STONE

Small Find No: Plan No: Photos (Digital): D129 Frames 1-7 inclusive Recorded by: DP Date: 16/5/19 Checked by: Date:

Figure 2.3 Context (70012)

Context Record – Fill/Layer

Co-ordinates: Site Code: POU/CHF/19 Trench No: LXX (18V) Context No: (70012)

Length: 72cm Width: 7.5cm Diameter: N/A

Colour (visual): SUB-YELLOWISH BROWN Texture (e.g. silt/clay): CLAY LOAM Consistency (e.g. silt/clay): STICKY PLASTIC

Coarse components (5% and approx. size in mm): MODERATELY STONY (16-35%) MEDIUM STONES (20-60mm) ANGULAR + SUB-ANGULAR SHAPE

Description:

1. Extent: 32cm x 7.5cm
2. Relationship to other features: BELOW FILL OF (70008)
3. Distribution of other components/flats: GATHERED ON BOTTOM
4. Weathering: NO
5. Preservation of organic: GOOD
6. Method of excavation: TROWL, MATTOCK, PLASTIC KNIFE

(cont'd overleaf)

Stratigraphic relationships

Below: 70008

Cut by:

Same as: This Context

Above: N/A

Fill of: 70008

Interpretation (with reasons):

1. Date of deposition: Pre-3rd Century
2. Circumstances of deposition: Possible roman d/t
3. Origin: Domestic waste
4. Function: Midden

(cont'd overleaf)

Find:

None ☐ CE ☒ A Bone ☒ Clay Pipe ☐ Glass ☐ Iron ☐ Other Metal ☐ Wood ☐ Leather ☐

Plastic ☐ B.M. ☐ H Bone ☐ Flint ☐ Plaster ☐ Coin ☐ Slag ☐ Shell ☐

Other finds (specify): CHARCOAL, HEAT AFFECTED STONE

Small Find No: Plan No: Photos (Digital): D129 Frames 1-7 inclusive Recorded by: KW Date: 16/5/19 Checked by: Date:

Figure 2.4 Context Register

TRENCH 70.

Context No	Trench	Description	Initials	Date
(70001)	70	TOP SOIL	PB	15/05/19
(70002)		SUB SOIL	PB	15/05/19
(70003)		CUT OF DITCH	PB	15/05/19
(70004)		TOP FILL OF [70003]	PB	15/05/19
(70005)		CUT OF DITCH	AS	15/05/19
(70006)		TOP FILL OF [70005]	AS	15/05/19
(70007)		CUT OF DITCH	PB	15/05/19
(70008)		TOP FILL OF [70007]	PB	15/05/19
(70009)		CUT OF DITCH	MR	15/05/19
(70010)		TOP FILL OF [70009]	MR	15/05/19
(70011)		FILL BELOW (70006)	ES	15/05/19
(70012)		FILL BELOW (70008)	HK	15/05/19

Figure 2.5 Photo Register

Photographic Register

Site Code: POU/CHF/ Page 1 of 2 Film No.

Frame No.	Description	From?	Scale	Initials	Date
1	Pre-excavation of Roman ditch	NE	1x2m x 1m	PB	14/05/19
2	Pre-ex Roman ditch w/ scale	NE	1x2m x 1m	PB	14/05/19
3	Pre-ex Roman ditch w/ scale	NE	1x2m x 1m	PB	14/05/19
4	Pre-ex Roman ditch w/ scale	SW	1x2m x 1m	CLG	16/05/19
5	Close up of Roman ditch w/ scale	SW	1x2m x 1m	CLG	16/05/19
6	Close up of Roman ditch w/ scale	SW	1x2m x 1m	CLG	16/05/19
7	Close up of Roman ditch w/ scale	SW	1x2m x 1m	CLG	16/05/19
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