

Hunt the Saxons 2007

Test Pit report for Test Pit 33 88, Abbey Street, Faversham, Kent. Grid Reference TR: 60180:16165

1. Introduction

Number 88 Abbey Street is on the east side of the south (town) end of Abbey Street. It has a rear road access from Vicarage Street, a cul-de-sac off Church Street. The property is typical of this section of Abbey Street being: 'Two storey, timber framed late 15th century house, re-fronted in the 18th century.'¹

Figure 1 from the Jacobs map² shows the area behind the Abbey Street houses laid to cultivated plots/gardens and may be purely representative in this. It does however show the boundary between these plots and those of what is now the Physic Garden (was the Free Grammar School). Figure 2 from the 1865 OS map³ shows that the garden of 88 is the same as now, with sheds and flower beds in similar positions



Figure 1: Jacobs map of 1774



Figure 2: OS 1865 map

Figure 3, the OS map of 1908⁴ however shows a division halfway along the garden with no indication of ownership of the rear half. This division has gone in later OS maps. Considerable change has taken place in the surrounding area since 1865. There were houses, Cobden Place and Oyster Court, to the south of this garden where Vicarage Street now runs.

¹ Swaine A, 1969, *Faversham Conserved* Kent County Council Supplies Department Maidstone p63
² Jacobs E, 1774, *History of Faversham* reprint 1974 Faversham Society map of Faversham p
³ OS 1865 (1904 reprint) Sheet XXXIV.9.10 Scale of original 1:536
⁴ OS 1908 Sheet Scale of original 1:2500



Figure 3: OS 1908 map

Vicarage Street itself was developed in phases, the first is seen in Figure 3. Although the run of the Physic Garden wall behind number 88 throughout remains as shown in 1865 and earlier, in the 1908 map, figure 3, it changes behind numbers 82 to 85 to the present alignment.

The occupier during the first half of the 20th Century worked at the Gunpowder Works and after retirement as a gardener⁵.

2. Location of pit

The test pit was sited in the rear of the garden on a small lawn avoiding the shrubbery, flower-beds and paved areas nearer the house. The location had to take into account the shared access between the rear gate and the rear gardens of number 87 and 86 illustrating the complex nature of the Abbey Street property ownership. Due to the obstacles the location measurements for the pit were not taken from the rear of the house (FSARG practice) but from the rear wall south-eastern corner and from the old gate buttress adjacent to the rear gate. These seemed the most permanent structures available.



Figure 4: TP33 relationship to S & SE walls



Figure 5: TP33 relationship to Abbey St.

⁵ Stevens P, 2002, *A second look at Abbey Street: Faversham Paper 81* Faversham Society, Faversham p44,p53

3. The procedures

A one metre square was pegged out and marked with string. The position of the square was recorded by measuring as stated above. Turf was removed carefully from the square, rolled and set aside in plastic bags. The pit was then excavated in 30 cm spits (layers). Due to the developing complexity of this pit the soil was removed contextually within some spit levels with reassessment at each 30 cm level. Where possible and appropriate the excavated soil was sieved, and the spoil heap scanned using a metal detector. Finds were set aside for each spit and separate contexts within the spits. On completion of the excavation, the spoil was returned and tamped down. Due to voids and the large amount of iron removed, additional soil was needed to recover the lawn level. The turf was replaced and watered.

4. The findings

A sondage at the bottom of the excavation at 140cm produced a large 'Midland black' pot base giving indicating the lowest level to have a 'no earlier than' dating of 16th century. With this pottery there was demolition material including peg tile fragments and plaster with lathe marking on one side, oyster shells, and animal bones. Similar material was also found in the level immediately above. This debris may be from the 18th century work when Swaine notes that the front of this and neighbouring houses were modernised.⁶ The other pottery found at these levels was 16th to 18th with three pieces of medieval. The few pieces of 19th century ware were small enough (c2x2cm) to have migrated down through the rubbish by weather or animal activity: small animal (rat/mouse) bones were present in the higher heap deposit. These bottom level finds were from the part excavation of 40% of the test pit area at 90 to 120 cm and the sondage to 140 cm of only 25x40 cm area.

Above these part-excavated levels, one side of the excavation appeared to indicate a rubbish dump heap area. This rubbish assemblage is considered a heap rather than a dug pit as its diameter enlarged with depth. It contained a large collection of iron objects (Figure:6), building material and other objects producing many voids within it. These metal and other objects included paint tins, a bicycle pedal, glass bottles, pottery fragments and other kitchen rubbish including a large quantity of whelk shells, a tea-pot without its lid and even some duck or goose egg pieces.

Four glass bottles were of particular note for assemblage dating purposes:

- A moulded clear glass scent bottle with pink, green and yellow label with remaining wording 'HA...KERCHIEF PARSONS MANCHESTER'
- A 20th century, traditional design, blue glass 'Vick' jar, moulded, with the moulded Vick triangular marking on the base having a number 8 outside the mark.
- A triangular shaped clear glass (green tinge) bottle with 'Rum and Coffee' Paradise Island Illustration label intact. Label gives detail 'Sole Manufacturers Drysdale & Co Ltd Edinburgh – Protected by Trade Mark Registration and Copyright.' Base mark 'RD Des 707 505' dates it to 1924/25.⁷⁸
- Two square Gartons sauce bottles of the iconic 'DADDIE'S' design. This particular design dates from 1896 to 1903. The moulding has 'DADDIE'S' on one of the three recessed side panels of the mould and 'SAUCE' on the opposite recessed side. The fourth

⁶ Swaine op cit p63

⁷ www.great-glass.co.uk

⁸ www.Scottishfoodanddrink.com

'British Registered Designs'

'Brodie Melrose Drysdale & Co Ltd'

Accessed 23/08/07.

Accessed 23/08/07

side is flat with no label was present. The two bottles were similar with only minor differences in size.



Figure 6: Ironwork



Figure 7: Rum & Coffee bottle showing label (left) and base (right)

Within the rubbish heap area the pottery was dominated by 19th century kitchen ware but with 18th century present. The collection of metal objects (fig 6 and see also attached inventory) may have been purely a collection of 'junk' as it consisted of heavily worn tools such as files, a chisel and a hammer head, but also wall/beam steel hooks, bolts, and cast iron work thought to be associated with a domestic kitchen stove or fireplace. The latter objects are decorative with floral and a fleur de lis designs and must have been from the property itself.

The soil outside this dump assemblage (90 to 30 cm) was firm yellow/brown clay with lenses of a more yellow clay within it and some chalk particles. It was a more general soil matrix with fewer bones and shells and minimal building material. Within this outer clay area, 16th

to 19th pottery was present with some medieval pottery. At the top (60 to 30 cm) it contained 18th to 20th century pottery but again included two pieces of medieval and a single piece of Saxo-Norman. One whole and one part bottle from this level were also dated.

- Top of a bottle Non-machine made blob top bottle 1880-1900⁹
- Whole square body bottle Moulded with three sides recessed. No threading. Moulding lines suggest 1880-1900.¹⁰

The soil under the turf was fine grained, friable dark brown garden topsoil with a high ash and cinder content, few finds and pottery fragments dated as 18th to 20th century. This top 30cm was typical topsoil and probably imported from elsewhere to cover the rubbish area when the lawn was laid.

Animal bone fragments included those of: bird (probably chicken), pig, sheep and cattle, with a few of smaller (rodent?) animals. The quantities of the larger animals were greater at the lower levels of the rubbish heap and the underlying level. Other bulk finds found throughout were shells (oyster, whelk), coal/coke, brick and peg-tile and mortar/plaster pieces.

5. Interpretation

This test pit was dominated by what is considered to be a large rubbish heap found at the 30 cm depth and continuing down to 90 cm. It extended over half of the excavation area. Although much of the material found in it is of an early 1900's dating and may indicate a long period of rubbish dumping, local knowledge indicates that this is more likely to be associated with the wholesale renovation of the Abbey Street properties and there outbuildings/sheds in the 1960's. If this is so then the spread of demolition and accumulated house/shed clearance material may extend over the larger part of the rear lawn. The lathe plaster at the bottom may be from an earlier renovation. The presence of such a large quantity of rubbish material on this piece of land suggests that the separate back portion of the plot shown on the 1908 map had become derelict for a period. In later maps the division has gone.

6. Final comments

This was not an easy test pit to excavate. It possessed safety hazards as the loose contents of the heap produced unstable side walls and the material had sharp cutting edges. It also challenged the use of the spit method. By using a hybrid spit/context method and good logbook discipline, record-keeping, photographs and final logbook sketch sections the excavation team involved enabled the context limits of the heap to be followed through the spits.

7. Acknowledgments

Many thanks to Mr and Mrs Logan for the opportunity to excavate and we greatly appreciated the tea/coffee and biscuits.

Also thanks to the team for managing to keep the logbook, record sheets etc. going during the periods of cold and drizzly weather.

⁹ Polak M, 2005, *Warman's Bottles Field Guide* Krause Publications p21
¹⁰ Polak M, 2005, *Warman's Bottles Field Guide* Krause Publications p

Small Finds



SF720



SF721



SF722



SF723



SF724



SF725



SF726



SF727



SF728



SF729



SF730



SF731



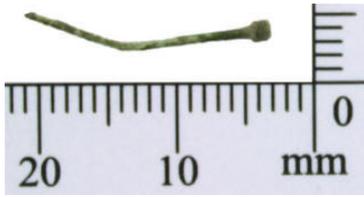
SF732



SF734



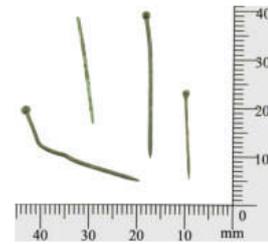
SF737



SF748



SF778



SF782



SF792

Small Finds Details

- SF720: Top of Bottle. Non-machine made blob top of bottle. Seam from mould extends to the top but not over the lip, circa 1880-1910, (Polak, M., 2005 "Warman's Bottles Field Guide", p21. Krause Publications. Clear glass with green tinge due to impurities. Slight crizzling.
- SF721: Ring. Plain undecorated ring. Some corrosion and a little green patina. Probably pipe olive for central heating pipe - most likely ID.
- SF722: Coin/token, heavily corroded. Detail at present mainly not detectable. Shiny, silvery patch in middle.
- SF723: Paint tin. Flattened tin, heavily corroded but with one side retaining painted decoration and lettering. Sit-on lid missing, other wise complete. Background Colour pale aqua, with a) dark blue instructional lettering on beige with gilt edge to panel b) dark blue outline to shadowed capitals for main label. Art deco decoration (foliage, gilt twigs effect). Inset panel with SU EY , possibly SURREY? Brand name seems to end in NS. Probable date 1920s-30s.
- SF724: Scent bottle. Moulded scent bottle, clear glass. Remains of label on the front of the bottle with some letters visible. Pink green and yellow label ,Glass is natural blue tinged due to impurities in metal mix. 1850--1900. Words on label readable are 'HA.....KERCHIEF PARSONS MANCHESTER'.
- SF725: Bottle. Square body, moulded bottle with three sides recessed and one flat for label. Seams at two corners of bottle from base to base of neck rim. Well defined kick. Thick, clear glass (green tinge due to impurities). Mould seams. Must have had stopper as no screw mouldings. Moulding lines suggest 1880-1900 (Polak 2005:21). Could be linseed or lung tonic bottle ,see www.thegarret.org.uk accessed 21/08/07
- SF726: Daddie's Sauce Bottle. Bottle shape: Square, Gartons HP Sauce 1896 to 1903 icon design with 'DADDIE'S' on recessed side and 'SAUCE' on opposite recessed side. Bottle has three recessed sides and one flat. No paper label present. Very similar to SF No. 729 but difference in weight and size of lettering on bottle and very slight difference to the shoulder detail. Base detail: "20" with circular impressed kick. Possible 1920's or later. Some crizzling and iridescence.

- SF727: Oil can. Small oil can of Cu-alloy with silvery tinned coating. Round body with flat bottom, which is missing. Tapering spout. Screw-top with groove. Corroded in parts. Probably 20C.
- SF728: Oil Bottle. Round clear (green tinge due to impurities in metal mix), mould-made glass bottle. Slight chip to rim. Circa 1890.
- SF729: Daddie's Sauce Bottle. Ok Bottle shape: Square, Gartons HP Sauce 1896 to 1903 icon design with 'DADDIE'S' on recessed side and 'SAUCE' on opposite recessed side. Bottle has three recessed sides and one flat. No paper label present. Very similar to SF No. 726 but difference in weight and size of lettering on bottle and very slight difference to the shoulder detail. Base detail: "20" with circular impressed kick. Possible 1920's or later.
- SF730: Teapot. Earthenware brown teapot with one pink and two white broad stripes all the way round. 'Tide mark' and filter show usage, but otherwise very little wear. Lid missing. Some creaking of pink glaze. Probably mid 20th century but could be later (standard everyday design).
- SF731: Bottle. Rum and Coffee Bottle with paper label attached. Triangular shape, clear glass (with green tinge due to impurities). Applied rim to top. Label: "Sole Manufacturers Dysdale & Co Ltd Edinburgh - Protected by Trade Mark Registration and Copyright -
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RUM AND COFFEE " with Paradise Island illustration.
Number on Base "RD Des 707 505 " which dates bottle to 1924/25

Reference: "British Registered Designs" Available from: www.great-glass.co.uk accessed on 23/08/07
"Brodie Melrose Dysdale & Co Ltd" Available from: www.Scottishfoodanddrink.com accessed on 23/08/07
- SF732: Vick's Jar. Moulded Vick's Jar; marks and label on front of jar; vick's triangular stamp on base with number 8 stamped outside triangle. Of traditional design circa 20th century.
- SF734: Doll's head. Two fragments of a doll's head made from bisque (unglazed porcelain). One piece chin with tip of mouth, one piece back of head with left ear. The back piece has number 9 1/2 stamped on it. The chin piece has remains of fixative on inside. Late 19th/ early 20th century.
www.vam.ac.uk/moc/collections/dolls/ceramic_dolls
- SF737: Medal / badge. Stamped metal artefact, made up of a circular band enclosing a shield device, with crown perched on the top. The band contains letters -mostly indecipherable due to corrosion accretions. The shield has three identical motifs, arranged one above the other: probably a scimitar, possibly an old fashioned hand gun. On the reverse, iron staining and corrosion accretions, probably from fastening device. 20th c? Essex and Middlesex both have three ranked scimitars in their coats of arms (formerly seaxes)
- SF748: Pin, bent in middle, signs of corrosion. Polygonal / cylindrical head.
- SF778: Whetstone. Damaged whetstone with Fe stains. Heavily polished. Rectangular. Tapers from edge to edge.
- SF782: Pins. 1 fragment (a) head missing, very corroded 3 whole pins (b) slightly bent, spherical grooved head (c) very bent, spherical grooved head (d) very fine pin, small blob head.
- SF792: Ball. Cream-coloured ceramic marble.