



Hunt the Saxons 2005

Test Pit report for Test Pit 24 in the Flood Lane picnic area Grid Reference TR 601040 161290

1 Introduction

Flood Lane runs northwards from the West St/Tanners St junction, down towards the east bank of Faversham Creek. Fig 1 shows dramatic changes in this area over the last two hundred years. Jacob's map of 1774 shows no buildings along Flood Lane, or indeed anywhere between the houses on the north side of West St and the bank of the Creek presumably because of risk of flooding. By 1840, however, this zone has begun fill up and by 1865 rows of terraced houses and numerous industrial buildings, including an abattoir and small stockyard, have appeared. The Gas Works of the Faversham Gas-Light & Coke Company (founded 1830) lie to the immediate east. These are still present in 1907 and the Gas Works has expanded eastwards and southwards. By 1958 most of these buildings have been demolished, although the Gas Works survived until 1991 (see fig 2). By 2005, only numbers 1-5 Flood Lane had survived and lower Flood Lane had become an attractive open area with grass and trees, bordering the stream.

Because TP24 was in a public area with a much used thoroughway, it had to be dug and backfilled in a single day. This TP did, however, give us the opportunity for an Open Day: this was offered as part of the Faversham Open House weekend.

2. Location of pit

Because of the amount of demolition that had happened here in the mid-20th century, care was taken to avoid previously built up locations, as can be seen in Fig 1. The Test Pit was located in what was shown on the 1865 and 1907 maps as an open area at the rear of 72-71 West St and west of what seemed to be a well marked boundary wall. (Fig 1) Although demolition rubble was expected, we hoped to avoid actual footings of houses.



Fig 2: Photograph taken of Flood Lane properties just before demolition in the late 1950s.

TP24 was behind these houses.

In the background are the backs of West St houses

Thanks to Arthur Percival who has given permission for us to use this picture from his personal collection.

3. The procedures

A one metre square was pegged out using the planning square and the area delineated marked with string. The position of the square was recorded by measuring to mapped boundaries and drain covers. Turf was removed carefully from the square, rolled and set aside in plastic bags. The pit was then excavated in thirty cm spits (layers), each spit being trowelled out in five cm layers. Because of shortage of time, only one quadrant of Spit 4 was excavated to a depth of 15cm. All excavated soil was sieved meticulously, and the spoil heap scanned using a metal detector. Finds were set aside for each spit, with special finds being given three dimensional coordinates to pinpoint the exact find spot. Finally, the spoil was put back in, tamped down, watered and the turf replaced.

4. The findings

Spit 1 was composed mainly of recent levelling deposits, being a sandy, compact layer with inclusions of tarmac and road stone, as well as small fragments of brick and tile (CBM), glass and pottery. In Spit 2, a layer of densely packed tile with some brick was encountered, itself covering a dark brown soil matrix with ash and cinder pockets and a lens of yellow-brown clay. This layer reached down nearly to the bottom of S3. Here the ash faded out and the brown deposit became more homogenous, though still containing many small fragments of CBM (Fig 2)

Apart from CBM, this was not a finds-rich Test Pit, although the main CBM layer (S2 and upper S3) yielded a fair quantity of 19th / early 20th century household debris. Glass from windows and small vessels, coke and clinker, crockery, clay pipe fragments, nails and horse shoe fragments were mixed in with the building material. Animal bone and shell were only present in small quantities. Below the demolition layer, finds were sparse but still mainly 19th century.

Nearly all of the pottery dated from mid 19th to mid 20th century, with a few sherds of possible late 18th century. It included fragments of items such as candlesticks and ornaments as well as crockery. Two small pieces of porcelain were found. One unusual aspect was that 113 grams of the pottery showed damage from chemicals.

One sherd of medieval Tyler Hill pottery was found in Spit 3.

5. Interpretation

Although the careful choice of location meant that house footings were avoided, demolition debris dominated this Test Pit. Mixed in with the brick and tile were many relics of working class life in the late 19th- early 20th century. A few fragments of earlier artefacts were found, but, even at one metre down, the earlier occupation levels were only just being reached. The lowest deposits were seen as garden deposits for the 19th-20th century houses.

The single sherd of Tyler Hill medieval pottery is not very useful on its own in a churned deposit. Occasional sherds of medieval pottery are 'white noise' in deposits of all ages in Tanners St/West St, and have to be seen as residual.

6. Final comments

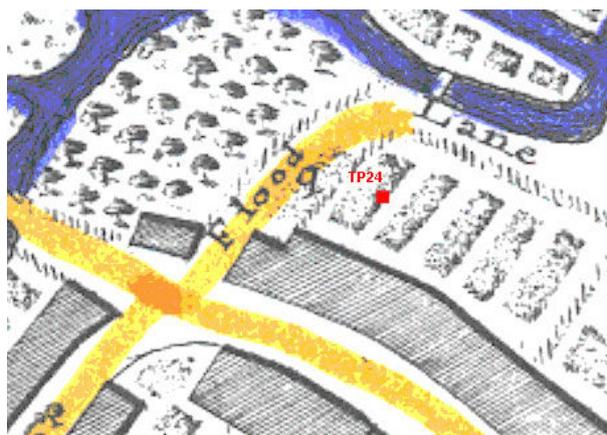
TP24 was dug in more haste than is usual for our project, and the demolition layer made it hard work. As has been so often the case in this old part of town, the pit 'bottomed out' just as it was getting interesting. In 2006, we intend to return to this open area once we have surveying and geo-resistivity measuring equipment.

7. Acknowledgments

Thanks to Graham Tuff of Swale Council for obtaining permission for us to dig in this spot, and to our visitors during this Open House day who showed so much interest. Although archaeologically frustrating, the opportunity to meet the public was very much appreciated.

Pat Reid
November 2006

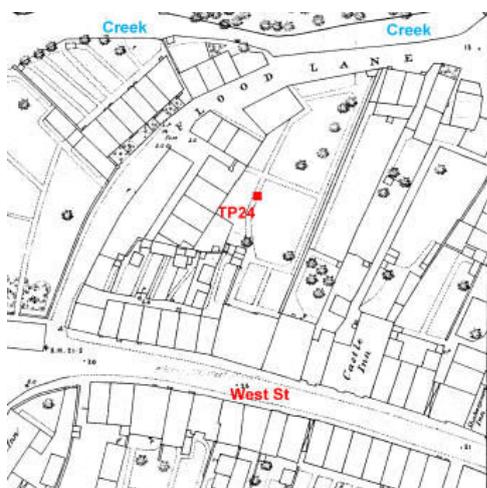
Fig 1: Changes in the Flood Lane area 1774 - 2005



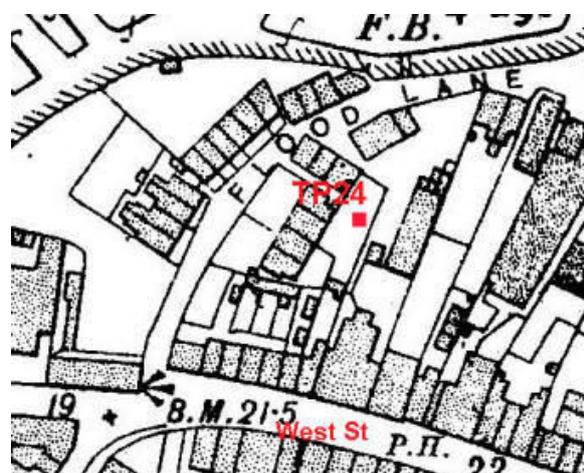
a) 1774¹



b) 1840²



c) 1865³



d) 1907⁴



e) 1958⁵



f) 2005⁶

¹ Jacobs E 1774 map of Faversham in *History of Faversham* reprint 1974 by the Faversham Society

² 1840 Tithe map

³ OS 1865 (rev 1904) Sheet XXXIV.9.5 1: 536

⁴ OS 1907 Kent Sheet XXXIV.9 1: 2500

⁵ OS 1958 TR 0161 NW 1:1250

⁶ OS 2004 TR 0161NW 1:1560

Small Finds



SF26



SF27

Small Finds Details

- SF26: Copper Alloy Coin / Token (unidentifiable). Heavily corroded especially on one side. Unidentifiable.
- SF27: Thimble. Small - just fits on my smallest finger. Plain around base. Fine indented pattern all over top of sides, plain slightly domed top. Looks machined.