

**Report on an  
archaeological  
watching brief of  
geotechnical test-pits**

**Colchester Garrison  
PFI site**

**January 2001**

**on behalf of  
W S Atkins Consultants Ltd**



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**CAT Report 110**

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Fig 1 Geotechnical boreholes and test-pits September 2000.

# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This is a report on an archaeological watching brief carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) for W S Atkins Consultants Ltd, on geotechnical test-pits between the 11th and 28th of September 2000.
- 1.2 The development area is located 1km to the south of the modern town centre. The 304 hectare irregular block of land is enclosed by: Layer Road and Butt Road and Married Quarters to the west; Mersea Road, Monkwick and the modern cemetery to the east; Berechurch Hall Road to the south; and Southway and Artillery Barracks Folley to the north. Berechurch Road bisects the site from north-east to south-west. The development site includes the built-up areas and recreational areas of Colchester Garrison as well as MoD-owned arable and grass fields.
- 1.3 The site lies between 27m and 35m AOD. The PFI scoping exercise (pp 2-4) records that 'the site is underlain by the Recent and Pleistocene Glacial Sands and Gravels which comprise sandy flint gravels with quartz and occasional quartzites. In the south-western part of the site, the Glacial Sands and Gravels are overlain by Recent and Pleistocene Brickearth or Loam which is composed of brown clay containing variable amounts of sand, silt and pebbles... The solid geology underlying the site comprises London Clay, the thickness of which is estimated to be between 40m and 50m... Beneath the London Clay are the Lower London Tertiaries comprising sands, silts and clays with a probable thickness of 10m to 20m. The Chalk underlies the Lower London Tertiaries approximately 70m below ground level.'
- 1.4 This report follows the standards set out in the Borough Council's *Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (1996), *Guidelines on the preparations and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums* (1996), and the IFA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (1994).
- 1.5 Seventy-seven test-pits and fourteen boreholes were excavated in September 2000 by contractors for W S Atkins Consultants over the entire PFI site. This was part of a land-quality statement site investigation, the purpose of which was to establish whether the ground had been contaminated and also to locate services. The Archaeological Officer for Colchester Borough Council required an archaeologist to be present to carry out a watching brief. Field officer Kate Orr of CAT carried out the work, monitoring 58 of the 77 test-pits and one of the 14 boreholes. This report is set out on a day by day basis.

## 2 Archaeological background

2.1 The Garrison PFI site is located within the major Iron Age settlement of Camulodunum and on the edge of the Roman legionary fortress and town of *Colonia Claudia*. Part of the area is of national archaeological importance; among the sites contained within it are the Iron Age Berechurch Dyke, cropmarks of features of probable late Iron Age or Roman date, Iron Age and Roman cemeteries, Roman kilns and a possible Roman road, as well as the scheduled site of the medieval Abbey of St John. The line of Civil War Siege defences are thought to run across the northern section of the site. World War Two sites can also be found within the development area.

## 3 Non-technical summary

- 3.1 The majority of the finds from the test-pits were post-medieval in date, with a notable lack of medieval artefacts. Roman material was retrieved from eight out of the fifty-eight test-pits monitored. This did not come from any defined features and was mixed in with post-medieval and modern material, indicating that archaeological remains had been disturbed.
- 3.2 Fragments of human skull found from Test-pit 13 in Meeanee Barracks are thought to be from an Anglo-Saxon burial, forming part of a Saxon cemetery in the Mersea Road area.
- 3.3 Roman material from Test-pit 2 near Flagstaff House is the first evidence for Roman occupation in this area. No structural remains were found and the finds of Roman pottery, tile and animal bone are what would be expected from a Roman rubbish-pit. However, these finds were mixed in with medieval and later material and so are thought to be residual.
- 3.4 Fragments of bone found in the spoil heap from Test-pit 65 on Abbey Field may possibly be human. Abbey Field forms part of a Roman cremation cemetery, part of which was excavated by CAT this year (Abbey Field sports pitch 2000.1, report in progress).

## **4 Aims and objectives**

The aim of the watching brief was to identify and record any archaeological features, finds or deposits revealed by the groundworks.

## **5 Methods**

- 5.1** Most of the pits were excavated by hand by the pitting crew to 1.2m depth and subsequently machine-excavated. There were normally two or three test-pits and boreholes being dug at any one time, often at different ends of the site. It was thus decided to concentrate on monitoring the test-pits as the boreholes were too narrow to observe. If it was not possible to be present during the excavation of every test-pit, it was usually possible to check the spoil heap and the sections after hand-digging and before backfilling. However, Test-pits 7, 14, 15, 22a, 28, 31, 35, 64, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 74 a-c and 75 c were not monitored at all.
- 5.2** Changes in soil layers in each test-pit were recorded and given numbers (Layers 1, 2, 3, etc). However, there was a difficulty in assigning strict layer numbers to the finds as the test-pits were dug by others or by machine, and usually not on a layer by layer basis. Therefore the provenance of the finds was often doubtful, especially as most of the finds were made from the spoil heap. For this reason finds were not bagged according to layers, but a written note was made of their depth where definitely known.
- 5.3** No definite archaeological features were recorded, even where finds were made. A few of the test-pits (Test-pits 13, 46, 47, 51, 52, 53, 73, 75 and 75a) were excavated by machine with visual monitoring of arisings, making it possible that some finds and features may have been missed.

## 6 Results

**11/09/00**

### *Borehole 108*

By the south-eastern car park on Abbey Field. 500mm x 500mm, hand-dug and monitored to a depth of 1.3m.

Layer 1 - sandy silt topsoil. 0-300 mm, with stones and some fragments of brick or tile.

Layer 2 - band of orange sandy silt. 300-400mm, with large pieces of tile.

Layer 3 - darker sandy silt. 400mm-1.2m, with modern pottery, some tile fragments, burnt brick and possible slag.

Layer 4 - sand and gravel. 1.2-1.3m.

### *Test-pit 49*

By the miniature rifle range on Abbey Field. 2m x 650mm, hand-dug and monitored to 1.2m depth.

Layer 1 - silty topsoil. 0-200mm.

Layer 2 - silt. 200-750mm, with brick fragments.

Layer 3 - lighter sandy silt with pebbles. 750-950mm. Piece of stick grenade found approximately 800mm down and retained by the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Officer. Also one fragment of clay pipe.

Layer 4 - orange sand and gravel. 950mm-1.2m.

### *Test-pit 50*

West of the TA centre on Abbey Field. 2m x 600mm, hand-dug to 1.2m depth.

Layer 1 - silty topsoil. 0-200mm.

Layer 2 - very hard, light brown silty clay. 200-550mm, with brick and glass fragments and some large pieces of brick plus tarmac, and one piece of brown glazed 16th- to 19th-century pottery.

Layer 3 - dark softer silt. 550mm-1.2m, containing: brick fragments; one piece of coke; one small piece of metal; one part of a stick grenade from approximately 800mm down and one WW1 gun cartridge from 1.2m down (both retained by the Explosive Ordnance Disposal officer); one sherd of Roman pottery from 1m down, next to one sherd of modern china.

**12/09/00**

### *Test-pit 65*

Next to the sunken sub-station on Abbey Field. 800mm x 200mm, hand-dug to 800mm depth. Only half of the trench was excavated as the presence of possible human bone necessitated the cessation of works.

Layer 1 - turf and topsoil. 0-200mm, with tile fragments.

Layer 2 - light brown silt. 200-700mm, with brick/tile fragments, four small fragments of possibly human bone (one burnt) and two pieces of clay pipe. These were seen on the spoil heap, and there was no visible burning nor any pottery or a pit showing in the trench. This area is within a Roman cemetery; however, Abbey Field has been heavily disturbed and terraced over the centuries and therefore it may be that the area has been disturbed and these bones are not *in situ*.

Layer 3 - orange sand. 700mm-1.2m.

#### *Test-pit 65A*

South of athletics ground, Abbey Field. This was dug as a replacement for Test-pit 65. 2m x 800mm, hand-dug to 900mm depth.

Layer 1 - turf and topsoil of dark brown silt. 0-300mm, containing an iron nail and peg-tile.

Layer 2 - darker silty clay. 300-900mm, containing one piece of green glazed pottery and one sherd of brown glazed pottery (both 16th to 19th century), one small piece of Roman pottery, one sherd of metallic brown glazed pottery, three pieces of clay pipe, one bone with a cut mark, and one piece of shell-gritted pottery.

Layer 3 - orange sandy clay. 900mm.

#### *Test-pit 59*

South of Test-pit 65 on Abbey Field. 200mm x 800mm, hand-dug to 1.2m depth.

Layer 1 - turf and silt topsoil. 0-230mm with brick fragments, six sherds of clay pipe, one piece of possible Roman pottery, and one piece of white china.

Layer 2 - silt. 230mm-1.2m, containing: one glazed rim sherd (16th to 19th century); one glazed slip-decorated sherd (post-1615); and two fragments of bone, possibly human.

Layer 3 - orange sand. 1.2m, containing one piece of tile found 2m down by the machine.

#### *Test-pit 46*

West side of Abbey Field. 2.5m x 500mm, de-turfed by hand and then machine-dug.

Layer 1 - turf and topsoil. 0-200mm.

Layer 2 - 200-400mm, containing one piece of possible Roman *tessera*, two pieces of clay pipe and one piece of possible Roman tile.

Layer 3 - reddish sand with some clay. 400mm downwards.

### **13/09/00**

#### *Test-pit 53*

By the Gas Chamber in an arable field. 2m x 600mm, machine-dug and monitored.

Layer 1 - grass and silt topsoil. 0-100mm.

Layer 2 - clayey silt. 100-330mm, containing an iron nail.

Layer 3 - sandy clay and gravel. 330-660mm.

Layer 4 - reddish sandy clay and gravel. 660-950mm.



(At 950mm I was called away to look at human bone found in Test-pit 13.)

*Test-pit 13*

Meeanee Barracks, Mersea Road side, in a concrete yard next to a newly demolished building. 2m x 600mm, machine-dug without archaeological supervision.

Layer 1 - concrete and hardcore. 0-130mm.

Layer 2 - mixed sand, dumped material. 130-380mm.

Layer 3 - dark wet sandy loam. 380-950mm.

Layer 4 - lighter sand with gravel. 950mm downwards. Four fragments of human skull were retrieved from the spoil heap by W S Atkins and thought to come from this layer. The rest of the spoil heap and the trench sides were checked for more bone but none was visible. There was no visible burial pit, features, artefacts or burning. As the pit was nearly down to natural and the area had previously been disturbed through building work, we agreed that they carry on machining a small amount at a time under archaeological supervision. No more bone was found. This is an area where Anglo-Saxon cremations and inhumations have been found previously.

*Test-pit 16*

North side of Meeanee Barracks. 2m x 600mm, machine-dug under archaeological supervision.

Layer 1 - reinforced concrete. 0-140mm.

Layer 2 - brickearth and hardcore. 140-440mm.

Layer 3 - sandy clayey silt. 440-500mm, very dark, containing two fragments of clay pipe and one sherd of modern pottery.

At approximately 500mm depth a water pipe was hit and the trench started to flood, and so it was abandoned.

**14.09.00**

*Test-pit 9*

Grass area in Hyderabad. 2m x approximately 800mm, hand-dug to 1.2m depth.

Layer 1 - turf. 0-100mm.

Layer 2 - dumped material and brick fragments. 100-550mm. A pit had been dug approximately 550mm down in the southern part of the trench where various items of military equipment from an armoured car had been buried, including:

a prism

a tripod for machine gun, dating from WW1 or from between the two World Wars

a leather pouch with asbestos lining

a blank 303 cartridge

a 9mm live pistol cartridge

a firing pin

These were retained by the EOD.

A piece of glass was also found. The trench was refilled due to a hard modern surface being encountered in the northern end of the trench.

#### *Test-pit 58*

Meeanee Barracks. 2m x 600mm, machine-dug through concrete and hardcore and then hand-dug to 1.2m depth.

Layer 1 - concrete. 0-140mm.

Layer 2 - brick hardcore. 140-330mm.

Layer 3 - dark silt. 330mm-1.2m, containing tile fragments, china, clay pipe, and a pointed stone implement possibly for writing (all found at 500mm approx).

Layer 4 - sand and gravel. 1-1.2m, containing one piece of oyster shell, one bone fragment and glass at 1m approx.

#### *Test-pit 8*

Hyderabad Barracks, grass area. 2m x 600mm, de-turfed by hand and hand-dug to 1.2m.

Layer 1 - turf and topsoil with brick/tile fragments and stones, silty sand. 0-270mm.

Layer 2 - lighter sandy silt. 270-450mm, containing brick fragments, stones, clay pipe, modern glass, oyster shell and one possible Roman sherd.

Layer 3 - orange sand. 450mm-1.2m, containing one unworked flint.

#### *Test-pit 2*

Flagstaff House car park, by the stores. 2m x 600mm; the machine removed the tarmac and hardcore and then it was hand-dug to 1.2m depth.

The test-pit was placed just outside the scheduled area of St John's Abbey, in an area where there may have been abbey buildings according to maps from 1610 and 1648. However, no medieval pottery was found and there was no sign of buildings or the precinct wall.

Layer 1 - tarmac and hardcore. 0-330mm.

Layer 2 - brown clayey sandy silt. 330-920mm, containing Roman roof tile and brick, eleven sherds of Roman pottery, animal bone, oyster shell, sheep or goat teeth and a pig jaw all from the southern end of the pit. The finds indicate a Roman rubbish-pit but no features were visible. There is no Roman occupation known from this area, although Roman burials have been found in the general vicinity and especially from the St Botolph's roundabout area.

Layer 3 - medieval or post-medieval brick (18th century, possibly) from a small area at the northern end of the trench.

Layer 4 - orange sand. 920mm-1.2m, containing one oyster shell.

#### *Test-pit 1*

Flagstaff House car park. 2m x 600mm, hand-dug to 1.3m.

Just outside the scheduled area of St John's Abbey, in an area where there may have been abbey buildings according to 1610 and 1648 maps. However, no medieval pottery was found and no sign of buildings or wall.

Layer 1 - tarmac and hardcore. 0-440mm.

Layer 2 - black silt. 440-560mm, containing oyster shell from 500mm down, modern pottery, clay pipe, bone, modern brick, two Roman sherds, peg-tile and a possible belamite fossil.

Layer 3 - lighter brown sandy soil. 560mm-1.2m, containing peg-tile, china, glass, one oyster shell, one Roman sherd, one piece of post-medieval stoneware, one piece of clay tobacco pipe bowl and modern pottery all down to 1.2m.

Layer 4 - orange sand. 1.2m.

### **18/09/00**

#### *Test-pit 3*

Cavalry Barracks. 2m x 600mm, hand-dug to 1.2m depth.

Layer 1 - tarmac. 0-100mm.

Layer 2 - light brown clayey silt. 100-180mm.

Layer 3 - orange/brown clayey sand with charcoal. 180-330mm.

Layer 4 - orange sand and gravel. 330mm-1.2m.

#### *Test-pit 38*

Cavalry Barracks. 2m x 600mm, hand-dug to 1.2m depth.

Layer 1 - tarmac. 0-90mm.

Layer 2 - light brown silt. 90-340mm, very mixed with one piece of modern pottery.

Layer 3 - darker silt. 340-630mm, containing a square piece of peg-tile.

Layer 4 - orange clayey sand. 630mm-1.2m.

#### *Test-pit 6*

Royal Military Police. 2m x 600mm, hand-dug to 1.2m depth.

Layer 1 - turf and silt topsoil. 0-120mm.

Layer 2 - lighter silt. 120-360mm, containing clay pipe, post medieval pottery and one burnt flint.

Layer 3 - band of light orangey fine silt with gravel. 360-420mm.

Layer 4 - silt with flecks of tile. 420mm-1m.

Layer 5 - orange sand. 1-1.2m.

#### *Test-pit 5*

Royal Military Police parking area. 2m x 600mm, hand-dug to 1.2m depth.

The spoil heap was checked for finds but there was no time to properly check the sides of the trench before it was filled in.

### **19/09/00**

#### *Test-pit 40*

Royal Military Police next to parking area. 2m x 600mm, hand-dug to 1.2m depth.

Layer 1 - turf, and silty topsoil with tree roots. 0-220mm.

Layer 2 - gravel at one end for a drain. Lighter brown silt. 220-400mm, containing modern glass and modern pottery.

Layer 3 - lighter silt. 400-700mm containing clay pipe and peg-tile fragments.

Layer 4 - red/orange sand. 700mm-1.2m.

One broken blue glass Victorian 'poison' bottle retrieved during machine-digging at 1.4m.

#### *Test-pit 20*

Goojerat Barracks car park. 2m x 600mm, hand-dug to 1.2m depth.

Layer 1 - tarmac and concrete. 0-240mm.

Layer 2 - hardcore. 240-490mm.

Layer 3 - dark grey brown loam. 490-670mm, containing one piece of modern china and one piece of clay pipe.

Layer 4 - brown clayey silt. 670mm-1.2m, containing green glass, modern pottery and clay pipe.

Very clear soil divisions.

One piece of willow pattern and one piece of modern pottery retrieved during machine-digging from 1.5m down.

#### *Test-pit 21*

Goojerat Barracks car park. 2m x 600mm, hand-dug to 1.2m.

Layer 1 - tarmac, concrete and sand. 0-220mm.

Layer 2 - wet silty grey clay with stones and tile fragments. 220-430mm.

Layer 3 - orange sand. 430mm-1.2m.

One piece of quarry tile from unknown provenance.

### **20/09/00**

#### *Test-pit 17*

Goojerat Barracks. 2m x 600mm, hand-dug to 1.2m.

Layer 1 - reinforced concrete and modern sand. 0-260mm.

Layer 2 - dark brown clayey silt. 260-510mm.

Layer 3 - clinker (small pebbles mixed with silty sand) probably surrounding a pipe which was outside the reach of the trench. 510-760mm.

Layer 4 - limestone hardcore but no pipe. 760mm-1.2m.

#### *Test-pit 18*

Goojerat Barracks. 2m x 600mm, hand-dug and monitored to 1.2m.

Layer 1 - tarmac and concrete. 0-200mm.

Layer 2 - hardcore. 200-400mm.

Layer 3 - band of grey/brown silty clay. 400-500mm.

Layer 4 - dark clayey brown sand. 400mm-1m, containing a 19th- or 20th-century glass ink bottle.

Layer 5 - orange sand and gravel, containing one piece of china at 1-1.2m.

*Test-pit 10*

Hyderabad Barracks vehicle park. 2m x 600mm, hand-dug to 1.2m.

Layer 1 - reinforced concrete and hardcore. 0-240mm, containing an iron piece of hobnailed boot.

Layer 2 - dark silty soft soil. 240-660mm, containing white modern pottery, clay pipe and brown glazed modern pottery. At the interface of Layer 1 and Layer 2 a bone was found (possibly human).

Layer 3 - lighter sandy silt. 660-880mm.

Layer 4 - orange yellow sand. 880mm-1.2m.

*Test-pit 11*

Hyderabad Barracks. 600mm x 2m, hand-dug to 1.2m.

Layer 1 - reinforced concrete and brick hardcore. 0-280mm.

Layer 2 - soft wet silty sand, homogeneous. 280mm-1.2m.

Layer 3 - sand. 1.2m.

*Test-pit 61*

Meeanee Barracks. Services were encountered and therefore only a small hole was hand-dug down to 2m. It was not possible to get in and check the sides.

Layer 1 - turf and silty topsoil.

Layer 2 - mixed rubble layer.

Layer 3 - brown silt.

Layer 4 - sand and gravel.

A copper-alloy object was found in the spoil heap whilst I was not there.

White china from 1.2m depth.

*Test-pit 60*

Cricket pitch. 2m x 600mm, hand-dug to 1.2m.

Layer 1 - turf and topsoil. 0-100mm.

Layer 2 - layer of asphalt from an old car park. 100-190mm.

Layer 3 - silty sand. 190-500mm. Modern glass and pottery from 480mm down.

Layer 4 - orange sand. 500mm-1.2m.

*Test-pit 55*

Old hospital site. 2m x 600mm, hand-dug to 1.2m.

Layer 1 - turf and topsoil.

Layer 2 - modern pottery, one lead weight, two sherds of blue and white pottery, one piece of clay pipe and one sherd of pink slip pottery.

Layer 3 - orange sand.

### **21.09.00**

#### *Test-pit 12*

Hyderabad Barracks. 1.85m x 600mm, hand-dug to 1.2m but not monitored all the way down.

Layer 1 - reinforced concrete.

Layer 2 - modern sand and gravel.

Layer 3 - a service pipe was encountered.

#### *Test-pit 56*

Old hospital site. 2m x 600mm, hand-dug to 1.2m.

Layer 1 - turf and topsoil of clayey silt. 0-300mm, containing piece of clay pipe.

Layer 2 - sandy silt. 300mm-1m with bricks. Unused clay service pipe encountered.

Layer 3 - orange sand. 1-1.2m.

#### *Test-pit 45*

By the electricity sub station, Circular Road South. 2m x 600mm, hand-dug to 1.2m.

Layer 1 - turf and clay topsoil. 0-150mm, with white pottery.

Layer 2 - clayey silt with stones. 150-560mm, with tile fragments.

Layer 3 - band of lighter silt. 560-700mm.

Layer 4 - silt. 700mm-1.2m.

Layer 5 - light silt. 1.2m.

#### *Test-pit 54*

Old hospital site. 2m x 600mm, 1.2m.

Layer 1 - turf and topsoil. Clayey silt with tile fragments and one piece of bone.

Layer 2 - lighter silt with brick fragments and rubble. Very compacted containing one piece of clay pipe, one square piece of tile, and one piece of metallic glazed pottery.

Layer 3 - a layer of brick rubble, possibly the remains of foundations of the old hospital

Layer 4 - silt.

Layer 5 - dark brown sandy silt. 1.1-1.2m.

#### *Test-pit 62*

Hyderabad Barracks. Hand-dug down to 1.2m at one end; at the other (eastern) end there was a layer of concrete, and so the eastern part was not hand-dug any further.

Layer 1 - reinforced concrete and brick hardcore. 0-330m.

Layer 2 - silt with brick rubble and one piece of modern drain. 330-840mm.

Layer 3 - silt. 840mm-1m.

Layer 4 - yellow brown sand. 1-1.2m.

## **25/09/00**

### *Test-pit 57*

Abbey Field, Circular Road South. Just under 3m x 600mm, hand-dug without archaeological monitoring; the spoil was then checked before it was machine-dug further.

Layer 1 - turf and silt topsoil. 0-370mm.

Layer 2 - silty sand. 370mm-1.2m.

The test-pit was extended to the north by machine as a service was encountered.

### *Test-pit 47*

Abbey Field, terraced area. 2m x 600mm, machine-dug.

Layer 1 - turf and silt topsoil. 0-230mm, with one glass fragment and one tile fragment.

Layer 2 - silt. 230-800mm, containing a bottle top.

Layer 3 - band of gravel. 800mm-1m.

Layer 4 - light brown clay. 1-1.2m.

Layer 5 - sand and gravel. 1.2m.

### *Test-pit 41*

Logistics Support. 2m x 600mm, hand-dug to 1.2m.

Layer 1 - tarmac and limestone hardcore. 0-290mm.

Layer 2 - clay with stones and tarmac. 290-390mm, containing modern pottery

Layer 3 - silt. 390-580mm.

Layer 4 - clay silt. 580mm-1.2m, with brick fragments and modern green glass, rusted wire, galvanised metal, one animal bone and slate down to 1.2m depth.

### *Test-pit 23*

Logistics Support. 2m x 600mm, hand-dug to 1.2m.

Layer 1 - turf and silt topsoil. 0-120mm.

Layer 2 - thin layer of ash. 120-150mm.

Layer 3 - natural orange sand with iron pan. 150-460mm.

Layer 4 - thin layer of gravel. 460-480mm.

Layer 5 - lighter sand. 480-660mm.

Layer 6 - layer of gravel. 660-680mm.

Layer 7 - sand. 680mm-1.2m.

### *Test-pit 25*

Kirkee Barracks parade ground. 2m x 600mm, hand-dug to 2m at one end.

Layer 1 - tarmac. 0-140mm.

Layer 2 - layer of orange clayey sand. 140-280mm.

Layer 3 - grey clay with sand. 280-500mm.

Layer 4 - light brown clay with sand. 500-690mm.

Layer 5 - wet sand and gravel. 690mm-2m.

A service pipe was hit at 300m and therefore the opposite end was dug to 2m.

*Test-pit 26*

Kirkee Barracks. 2m x 600mm, hand-dug to 1.2m.

Layer 1 - turf and topsoil.

Layer 2 - silty clay with brick fragments.

Layer 3 - sandy clay.

*Test-pit 51*

Driving school, overgrown area next to the concreted area. 2m x 600mm, machine-dug and partly monitored.

Layer 1 - grass and topsoil.

Layer 2 - asphalt and bricks (possible surface or material dumped here when they created the driving school concreted area).

Layer 3 - not known.

Layer 4 - sand.

*Test-pit 52*

Driving School, overgrown area next to the concreted area. 3m x 600mm, machine-dug.

Layer 1 - overgrown grass and topsoil. 0-150mm.

Layer 2 - black (dumped) material. 150-250mm.

Layer 3 - loose concrete layer. 250-320mm.

Layer 4 - black material. 310-410mm.

Layer 5 - brown silt. 410-970mm.

Layer 6 - orange silt. 970mm-1.3m.

Layer 7 - orange sand. 1.3m downwards.

The trench was extended to the south when a hard concrete surface was encountered.

**26/09/00**

*Test-pit 27*

McMunn Barracks, grass area. 2m x 600mm, hand-dug to 1.2m.

Layer 1 - turf and clayey silt topsoil. 0-180mm.

Layer 2 - layer of stone and gravel. 180-320mm.

Layer 3 - brick and tile fragments with modern pottery in silt/clay. 320-890mm.

Layer 4 - light clay. 890mm-1.2m, containing one Roman rim sherd at 1m.

*Test-pit 4*

Le Cateau Barracks, horse paddock. 1m x 1m, hand-dug to 2m depth.

Layer 1 - topsoil and grass. 0-220mm.

Layer 2 - shingle. 220-310mm.

Layer 3 - darker silt with stone. 310-590mm.

Layer 4 - lighter silt with stone. 590mm-1m.

Layer 5 - sand and gravel. 1-2m.



*Test-pit 73*

Site of Sobraon Barracks, overgrown area. 2m x 600mm, machine-dug.

Layer 1 - sparse topsoil. 0-100mm.

Layer 2 - broken discontinuous tarmac over loose rubble brick backfill with silty clayey sand. 100-300mm.

Layer 3 - yellow/orange sand. 300mm downwards.

**27/09/00**

*Test-pit 63*

Diesel store. 2m x 600mm, hand-dug to 1.2m.

Layer 1 - gravel. 0-20mm.

Layer 2 - band of asphalt. 20-270mm.

Layer 3 - sandy silt and gravel. 270-450mm.

Layer 4 - silty sand and gravel. 450mm-1.2m.

*Test-pit 24*

Diesel Store. 2m x 600mm, hand-dug to 2m.

Layer 1 - gravel. 0-20mm.

Layer 2 - silt with stones. 20-360mm with brick.

Layer 3 - orange/red sand. 360mm-2m.

A drainage pipe was encountered at 800mm and therefore the other end was hand-dug to 2m.

*Test-pit 30*

McMunn Barracks, south of the new building. 2m x 600mm, hand-dug to 1.2m.

Layer 1 - turf and topsoil. 0-110mm.

Layer 2 - darker silt. 110-270mm.

Layer 3 - lighter silt with small stones. 270-730mm.

Layer 4 - black (possibly burnt) silty sand. 730mm-1.1m.

Layer 5 - orange brown silty sand. 1.1-1.2m.

The area adjacent was stripped and flattened in 1994 in order to build a workshop. The material was deposited here and also used to form a bund to the rear.

*Test-pit 42*

McMunn Barracks, next to the car park of the new building. 2m x 600mm, hand-dug to 1.2m but only partially monitored.

Layer 1 - limestone hardcore. 0-50mm.

Layer 2 - clay. 50-180mm.

Layer 3 - limestone hardcore. 180-500mm.

Layer 4 - clayey sand. 500mm-1.2m.

#### *Test-pit 19*

Royal Military Police. 2m x 600mm, hand-dug to 1.2m.

Layer 1 - reinforced concrete and concrete hardcore. 0-280mm.

Layer 2 - brown silt with brick hardcore. Slab of concrete three-quarters of the way along. 280-440mm.

Layer 3 - grey black silty sand with brick and tile fragments and stone, very compacted - one piece of green glass. All made ground.

Layer 4 - softer brown sandy silt with brick fragments.

#### *Test-pit 75a*

Ypres Road, site of below-ground air-raid shelter opposite Officers' Married Quarters; grass field but bare of vegetation where old bunker was. Approximately 2m x 600mm, machine-dug.

Layer 1 - sandy silt with gravel (backfill from bunker). 0-1m.

Layer 2 - reddish sand. 1m.

No trace of bunker walls.

#### *Test-pit 75b*

Next to Test-pit 75. Approximately 2m x 600mm, machine-dug.

Layer 1 - grass.

Layer 2 - silt backfill containing large slabs of concrete with timber shuttering, the corner of the bunker *in situ*, one piece of green glass.

Layer 3 - sand.

#### *Test-pit 32*

Fuel and wash area, grass area. 2m x 600m, hand-dug to 1.2m.

Layer 1 - turf. 0-20mm.

Layer 2 - backfilled silt with stones. 20mm-1.2m, containing clay-pipe fragments, large modern bricks and large pieces of concrete. One piece of brown pottery with metallic glaze, one piece of modern glass, and pieces of wood and tarmac. A broken sewerage pipe was encountered at 1m.

Material was probably dumped here when the adjacent ground was levelled to create the fuel wash and when the sunken diesel tanks were installed.

### **28/09/00**

#### *Test-pit 36*

Roman Barracks, hand-dug to less than 1.2m.

Diesel contamination encountered.

Layer 1 - reinforced concrete. 0-30mm.

Layer 2 - concrete and brick hardcore. 30-360mm.

Layer 3 - sand. 360-620mm.

Layer 5 - red sand. 620mm-1.2m.

*Test-pit 34*

Roman Barracks, grass area, hand-dug to 1.2m.

Layer 1 - turf and topsoil; light brown silt with root activity, containing one piece of modern pottery and brick.

Layer 2 - lighter brown silt, very compacted, containing one piece of bone.

Layer 3 - orange coarse sand and silt, very compacted, solid.

*Test-pit 33*

Roman Barracks vehicle park, hand-dug to 1.2m.

Layer 1 - reinforced concrete and loose concrete. 0-230mm.

Layer 2 - concrete hardcore. 230-500mm.

Layer 3 - orange sandy silt and gravel with a lens of clay at one end. 500-590mm.

Layer 4 - black sandy layer. 590-730mm.

Layer 5 - clayey orange sand. 730mm-1.2m.

Water in the bottom.

*Test-pit 44*

Roman Barracks, hand-dug to 2m as a pipe was encountered.

Layer 1 - turf and topsoil; fine light brown silt. 0-130mm.

Layer 2 - lighter brown silt. 130-400mm, with modern glass.

Layer 3 - layer of concrete. 400-420mm.

Layer 4 - brown silt with stones. 420-1.1m.

Layer 5 - silty orange sand.

*Test-pit 37*

Roman Barracks, near eastern boundary and Berechurch Dyke, hand-dug to 1.2m.

Layer 1 - turf and topsoil silty clay. 0-100mm.

Layer 2 - sandy silt with pieces of concrete, modern brick and stones. 100-560mm.

Layer 3 - solid silt. 560-860mm.

Layer 4 - sand. 860mm-1.2m.

*Test-pit 76*

Middle of Sugar Beet Field. Small trench hand-dug to 2m but only partially monitored.

Layer 1 - topsoil. 0-300mm.

Layer 2 - light brown silt. 300mm.

**Test-pits not monitored**

*Test-Pit 7*

Royal Military Police.

*Test-pit 14*

North side of Meeanee Barracks.

*Test-pit 15*

North side of Meeanee Barracks. The EOD Officer retrieved a bowl of a clay pipe from the spoil heap.

*Test-pit 22a*

Logistics Support.

*Test-pit 28*

McMunn Barracks.

*Test-pit 31*

Fuel wash, in a grass area. 2m x 600mm, hand-dug. Concrete slab encountered.

*Test-pit 35*

Roman Barracks.

*Test-pit 64*

Kirkee Barracks.

*Test-pit 66*

Arable field south of Berechurch Road.

*Test-pit 67*

Arable field on Berechurch Road.

*Test-pit 68*

Arable field north of Berechurch Hall Road.

*Test-pit 69*

Arable field east of Roman Barracks.

*Test-pit 70*

Wooded area north west of Thomas Lord Audley School.

*Test-pit 71*

Site of Sobraon Barracks.

*Test-pit 72*

The paddock on Somme Road.

*Test-pits 74 a-c*

The other old bunker site, opposite Officers' Married Quarters on Ypres Road. Apparently there was no trace of a bunker as it had all been cleared away.

*Test-pit 75 c*

Ypres Road, opposite Officers' Married Quarters.

*Total number of test-pits not monitored*

19.

**Test-pits not excavated**

Test-pits 22b, 29, 39, 43, 48 were not excavated.

## 7 Finds

Bones were examined by Alec Wade<sup>1</sup> and other finds by Howard Brooks<sup>2</sup>. The earliest datable finds were Roman in date. Twenty-three Roman<sup>3</sup> artefacts were retrieved, mainly pottery and tile. Anglo-Saxon<sup>4</sup> artefacts were not present, although it is possible that the fragments of human skull found are Saxon in date. The only medieval<sup>5</sup> artefacts were peg-tile and these could be of later date. The vast majority of finds were post-medieval and modern (ie 16th century or later).

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<sup>1</sup> independent consultant, of 45 Maldon Road, Colchester

<sup>2</sup> of CAT

<sup>3</sup> AD 43-c 410

<sup>4</sup> c AD 410-1066

<sup>5</sup> AD 1066-mid 16th century

## 8 Conclusions

- 8.1 Roman pottery and tile from the test-pits, although sparse, was far more prolific than the medieval pottery. Where Roman material was found, it was not from defined features and appeared to have been mixed in with post-medieval material. Even the human bone found does not appear to be *in situ*. The skull fragments from Test-pit 13 have been confirmed as human but they do not appear to be *in situ*. The other bone fragments, from Test-pit 65, may be human but are too small to positively identify.
- 8.2 The relative paucity of the remains is partly a result of the large amount of disturbance to and contamination of earlier archaeological features caused by military activities and ploughing. That is not to say that all features have been destroyed. If trenches were deliberately targeted to potential archaeologically sensitive areas then the results would probably be more interesting. The narrowness of the trenches and the fact that some were machine-dug quite rapidly and others not watched at all must also be taken into account.

## 9 Archive deposition

A copy of this report and the finds will be deposited permanently with Colchester Museum under archive code 2000.59.

## 10 Acknowledgements

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RMPA Services

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Kate Orr  
January 2001

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*atholon/c:/reports/garrisonwb/rep110.doc*

# **Appendix**

## **List of finds by context**

*by Howard Brooks*



## Colchester Garrison boreholes 3

Museum accession code 2000.59

### Finds by context

*italicised finds are residual*

**bold finds are important dating**

Test-pit no	Finds no	Finds type	Qt	Wt in grams	Finds date	Context date
15	02	clay tobacco pipe stem fragment	1	12	post-medieval	post-medieval
3	03	peg-tile fragment (discarded)	1	10	medieval or later	20th century
3	03	very modern pipe fragment (discarded)	1	43	20th century	20th century
50	04	clay tobacco pipe stem fragments	3	10	post-medieval	19th-20th centuries
50	04	Fabric 40 handle fragment	1	9	16th-19th century	19th-20th centuries
50	04	Fabric 48d plate rim fragment	1	12	19th-20th centuries	19th-20th centuries
<i>50</i>	<i>04</i>	<i>sherd - Roman?</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>Roman</i>	<i>19th-20th centuries</i>
50	04	coke fragment (discarded)	1	4	?	19th-20th centuries
46	05	clay tobacco pipe stem fragments	2	7	post-medieval	post-medieval
46	05	squared tile - <i>tessera?</i>	1	34	Roman?	post-medieval
46	05	orange fabric shed with grey core - Roman?	1	13		post-medieval
65a	06	peg-tiles (discarded)	2	70	medieval or later	16th-19th centuries
<b>65a</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>Fabric 40 PMRE glazed</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>16th-19th</b>	<b>16th-19th centuries</b>
65a	06	Roman greyware sherd	1	2		16th-19th centuries
65a	06	bone				
21	07	modern orange fabric floor tile	1	86	20th century	20th century
6	08	clay pipe stem fragment	1	7	post-medieval	17th-19th centuries
6	08	Fabric 40 glazed sherd from jar	1		17th-19th century	17th-19th centuries
38	09	peg-tile fragments (discarded)	3	71	medieval or later	post-medieval
59	10	peg-tile fragment (discarded)	1	43		post-medieval
59	10	Metropolitan Slipware sherd Fabric 40a	1	15	after 1615	19th-20th centuries
<i>59</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>Roman greyware sherd?</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>Roman</i>	<i>19th-20th centuries</i>
59	10	Fabric 48d glazed sherd	1	31	16th-19th century	19th-20th centuries

Test-pit no	Finds no	Finds type	Qt	Wt in grams	Finds date	Context date
<b>59</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Fabric 48d sherd</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>19th-20th</b>	<b>19th-20th centuries</b>
59	10	clay tobacco-pipe stem fragments	6	14	post-medieval	19th-20th centuries
59	10	bone			post-medieval	19th-20th centuries
65	11	clay tobacco-pipe bowl and stem fragment	1	15	post-medieval	post-medieval
65	12	bone				?
65	13	bones			undated	undated
65	13	Fe fragment	1	3	undated	undated
1 (L1)	14	peg-tile fragments (discarded)	3	123	med or later	19th-20th centuries
1 (L1)	14	clay tobacco-pipe bowl and stem fragments	3	13	post-medieval	19th-20th centuries
1 (L1)	14	coal (discarded)	1	4		19th-20th centuries
1 (L1)	14	wood (discarded)	1	16		19th-20th centuries
1 (L1)	14	oyster shell fragments	4	57		19th-20th centuries
1 (L1)	14	clear glass bottle fragments	2	39	post-medieval	19th-20th centuries
<b>1 (L1)</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>Fabric 48d ironstone sherds</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>19th-20th century</b>	19th-20th centuries
1 (L1)	14	English stoneware Fabric 45m	1	6	17th/18th	19th-20th centuries
1 (L1)	14	Roman sherd	1		Roman	19th-20th centuries
8	15	flint: not a convincing struck flint	1	5		post-medieval
8	15	Fe bolt	1	261	post-medieval +	post-medieval
8	15	clay tobacco-pipe stem fragments	1	2	post-medieval	post-medieval
8	15	Fabric 42, Surrey Hampshire border ware	1	4	16th-17th century	post-medieval
8	15	bone				post-medieval
1 (L2)	16	bones	3	26		19th-20th centuries
1 (L2)	16	clay tobacco-pipe stem fragments	3	6	post-medieval	19th-20th centuries
1 (L2)	16	peg-tile	1	23	med or later	19th-20th centuries
1 (L2)	16	oyster shells	2	47		19th-20th centuries
<b>1 (L2)</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>Fabric 48d</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>19th-20th century</b>	19th-20th centuries
1 (L2)	16	modern stoneware Fabric 45m	1	69		19th-20th centuries
1 (L2)	16	unidentified sherd	1	19		19th-20th centuries
1 (L2)	16	Roman sherds	2	14	Roman	19th-20th centuries
40	17	peg-tile fragment	1	25	post-medieval	19th-20th centuries
40	17	Fabric 50b flowerpot sherd	1	12	19th-20th century	19th-20th centuries
40	17	Fabric 40 glazed sherd	1	15	17th-19th century	19th-20th centuries
<b>40</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>Fabric 48d ironstone</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>19th-20th centuries</b>	19th-20th centuries
40	17	oyster shell fragments	2	4		19th-20th centuries
40	17	glass fragment, probably milk bottle	1	15	19th-20th centuries	19th-20th centuries

Test-pit no	Finds no	Finds type	Qt	Wt in grams	Finds date	Context date
40	17	blue glass fragments from small bottle	2		?19th century	19th-20th centuries
40	17	clay tobacco pipe stem fragments	2	8	post-medieval	19th-20th centuries
2	18	peg-tile fragments (discarded)	3	452	medieval or later	medieval or later
2	18	Roman <i>tegula</i> flange	1	438	Roman	medieval or later
2	18	Roman <i>tegula</i> flat piece	1	47	Roman	medieval or later
2	18	Roman brick fragment	1	28	Roman	medieval or later
2	18	Roman <i>imbrex</i> fragment	1	65	Roman	medieval or later
2	18	brick/tile undated piece (discarded)	1	10		medieval or later
2	18	oyster shell fragments	4	86		medieval or later
2	18	bones				medieval or later
2	18	Roman sherds	11	480	Roman	medieval or later
2	18	Fe nail fragment	1	14		medieval or later
13	19	skull fragments				?
56	20	clay tobacco pipe stem fragment	1	11		post-medieval
<b>18</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>clear glass bottle, almost complete</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>19th or 20th century</b>	19th-20th centuries
18	21	green wine bottle fragment	1	22	post-medieval	19th-20th centuries
18	21	Fabric 48d sherd	1	5	16th-19th centuries	19th-20th centuries
<b>18</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>very modern glazed tile</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>20th century</b>	20th century
<b>18</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>very modern brick fragment</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>20th century</b>	20th century
18	22	clay tobacco pipe stem fragment	1	15	post-medieval	20th century
18	22	bone	1			20th century
<b>53</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>modern ceramic drain fragments</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>20th century</b>	20th century
53	23	Fabric 48d ironstone	2	9	19th-20th centuries	20th century
53	23	unidentified sherd	1	14		20th century
53	23	oyster shell fragments	2	2		20th century
53	23	clay tobacco-pipe stem fragment	1	5	post-medieval	20th century
60	24	pale green glass bottle base fragment	1	91	19th-20th centuries	19th-20th centuries
<b>60</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>Fabric 48d ironstone</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>19th-20th centuries</b>	19th-20th centuries
60	24	clay tobacco-pipe stem fragments	3	12	post-medieval	19th-20th centuries
60	24	sherd Fabric 50b flowerpot?	1	1	19th-20th centuries	19th-20th centuries
8	25	piece of thick, squared slate, smooth on three faces, broken on fourth; unknown use.	2	317		19th-20th centuries
8	25	clay tobacco-pipe stem fragments	8	14	post-medieval	19th-20th centuries
8	25	peg-tile fragments (discarded)	2	45	medieval or later	19th-20th centuries
8	25	dark green wine bottle fragment	1	14	19th-20th centuries	19th-20th centuries

Test-pit no	Finds no	Finds type	Qt	Wt in grams	Finds date	Context date
<b>8</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Fabric 48d sherd</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>19th-20th centuries</b>	19th-20th centuries
8	25	oyster shell fragment	1	2		19th-20th centuries
8	25	buff rim sherd - Roman?	1	4	Roman?	19th-20th centuries
<b>20</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>blue and white glazed tile fragment in Fabric 48d</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>19th-20th centuries</b>	19th-20th centuries
<b>20</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>Fabric 48d sherd, crazed glaze with purple flowers</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19th-20th centuries</b>	19th-20th centuries
62	27	very modern drain fragment	1	20	20th century	20th century
<b>20</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>pale green glass fragment</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>post-medieval</b>	post-medieval
20	28	clay tobacco stem fragments	5	14	post-medieval	
<b>20</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>modern brick or drain fragment</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>20th century</b>	20th century
20	28	Fabric 48d	3	15	19th-20th centuries	20th century
61	29	tiny cu-alloy lump	1	1		19th-20th centuries
<b>61</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>Fabric 48d sherd</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>19th-20th centuries</b>	19th-20th centuries
<b>10</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>Fabric 48d sherd</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>19th-20th centuries</b>	19th-20th centuries
10	31	Fe horseshoe	1	57		19th-20th centuries
10	31	peg-tile fragment (discarded)	1	25	medieval or later	19th-20th centuries
10	31	clay tobacco-pipe stem fragments	3	9	post-medieval	19th-20th centuries
<b>10</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>Fabric 48d sherds</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>19th-20th centuries</b>	19th-20th centuries
41	32	green glass fragment	1	14	20th century	19th-20th centuries
<b>41</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>Fabric 48d ironstone</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>19th-20th centuries</b>	19th-20th centuries
34	33	bones				?
27	34	rim sherd - Roman	1	29	Roman	Roman?
32	35	clay tobacco-pipe stem fragment	1	2	post-medieval	modern
<b>32</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>ceramic pipe fragment with internal glaze</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>modern?</b>	modern

Fig 1 Geotechnical boreholes and test-pits  
September 2000 (Crown Copyright).

