

(Partial report – for full report please contact author)

Small Finds Assessment, Minchery Paddock, Littlemore, Oxford (MP12)

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Introduction

A total of 51 objects recovered from excavations at Minchery Paddock, Littlemore, Oxford (MP12) were submitted for dating and assessment. The majority of the finds were from well stratified contexts with good location detail while a small number were identified during finds washing. The majority of the finds date to the medieval period, many specifically to the 13th and 14th century however a number of finds date to the post-medieval or modern period. The finds included a number of decorated floor tile fragments, clay pipe and two coins and personal items such as tweezers, buttons and pins. A bone tuning peg, probably for a psalter, may be a product of a workshop in St Aldates, Oxford. All finds span the medieval to modern periods and are summarised by trench in the paragraphs below and detailed in the tables provided.

Trench 1

Find no.	Context number	Object type	Condition	Count	Weight gms	Dating	Comments
1a	TP1 spit3	Pin	Complete	1	0.2	1300-1600	Dress or 'shroud' pin, applied wire head. Med - PM
1b	TP1 spit3	Pipe bowl	Fragment	1	2	1650 - c.1800	Marker's initials (unidentified) moulded on stem (later 17th C innovation)
1c	TP1 spit3	Button	Complete	1	0.2	1550+	Lathe turned bone button; lathe turned decoration of circumferential lines visible under eyeglass
1d	TP1 spit3	Unidentified	Fragment	1	5.9	Med - PM	Copper alloy fragment with multiple lines cast into it
105	1003	Pipe bowl	Incomplete	1	19.4	1700-1770	Undecorated pipe bowl with length of stem

Of the five small finds recovered from Trench 1, only the clay pipe bowls (1b and 105) were closely datable to c. AD 1650-1800. The other objects are all likely to be of post-medieval date apart from a thin dress or 'shroud' pin, the use of which was popular during the high medieval to early post-medieval period. It is likely that disturbance this layer during the post-medieval period has resulted in the pin being residual.

Trench 2

Find no.	Context number	Object type	Condition	Count	Weight gms	Dating	Comments
14	2001	Lead pipe	Incomplete	1	-	Late PM / Mod	Lead pipe; late 18th to 19th century.
47	2005	Decorated tile	Incomplete	1	121	1270-1380	Griffin facing left (c.f. Emden 1969:41, no 19)

125	2005	Decorated tile	Incomplete	1	103.4	1270-1380	Studded circle design (see Emden 1969:37, no 5).
81	2009	Silver coin	Incomplete	1	0.6	1180-1189	Short cross of Henry II; moneyer Osber, unknown mint
52	2012	Stone	Uncertain	1	191	Unknown	Cobble? Uncertain date or use
59	2017	Buckle plate	Incomplete, fragile	3	1.1	1250-1400	Probable buckle plate for a small buckle, leather surviving
137	2034	Toggle	Complete	1	6	Med	Pig metatarsal
141	2036	Pin	Incomplete	1	0.4	Post-Med	Dress or brooch pin of later medieval to post medieval date, c. 1400-1700.
85	2044	Silver coin	Complete, tarnished, corroded	1	1.5	1247-1279	Voided long cross, probably of Henry III Reverse too worn for mint/moneyer
87	2045	Unidentified	Incomplete	1	0.4	Med-Mod	Unidentified copper alloy fragment
111	2045	Spindle whorl	Complete	1	5.2	1200-1500	Probable spindle whorl: size of hole suggests this ID rather than a bead
114	2047	Tweezers	Complete	1	4.5	1270-1400	Tweezers with ear-scoop terminal, patterning to seam (to aid joining)
138	2052	Tuning peg	Complete	1	1.9	14-15th C	Bone tuning peg for an instrument

This trench contained a mixture of artefacts that, with one exception (find 14), can all be dated to the medieval period, with the majority falling into the c. 1200-1400 bracket. The artefacts consisted of those associated with general personal use, including dress accessories (SFs 59, 137, 141) and personal grooming (114). A possible spindle whorl was recovered (SF 111), as was a bone tuning peg for a stringed instrument (SF 138). The tuning peg, of Lawson's Type B, probably dates from the 14th to 15th century. The hole for the string is at the head end of the peg, a feature which suggests the instrument in question is a psaltery (Egan 1998: 286). The tuning peg's handle is polished through use. Several other examples were found in a 15th century context at St Aldates, Oxford (Durham 1977:163-164), the evidence from which suggests an instrument-making workshop that included the production of tuning pegs (*ibid.* 165-166).

Two fragments of decorated two-colour floor tile from context 2005 (SF 47 & 125) were identified. Both these examples, and all the others recovered from the site, are known as 'stamped Wessex' tiles due to the techniques of manufacture, design styles and the presence of keying holes in the base (Emden 1969). SF 47 depicts a griffin while SF 125 depicts part of a studded circle; both tiles can be paralleled with examples uncovered at St Peter in the East, Oxford, and also to tiles found in Osney Abbey and Littlemore Church (Emden 1969, figs 13 and 11 respectively). The tiles at St Peter in the East were laid c. AD 1330 (*ibid* 32), however this style was in production from the later 13th century well into the 14th century (see Eames 1985:54-55).

The only coins discovered on site were from Trench Two. A silver short-cross penny of Henry II (AD 1180-1189, SF 81) is the earliest datable artefact from the site. The coin is incomplete, being broken rather than cut down to a smaller denomination. The

moneyer is Osber, but the part of the coin with the mint name is now missing. The second coin (SF 85) is complete but is in poor condition; it is only identifiable as a 'voided' long cross penny which were issued AD 1247-1279. The vast majority of these coins were issued by Henry III (AD 1216-1272) however some were issued by Edward I until AD 1279. The coins come from different contexts; SF 81 came from a demolition layer (2009) while the voided long cross penny came from a levelling layer (2044), therefore it is likely that both of these are intrusive into these contexts.

End of sample report...