

Early Archaeology

When the excavation started we had no firm evidence from documents to suggest that the site was occupied earlier than the late 18th century but parish records suggested that there could have been a millers house by the early 17th century.

This changed at the end of 2015 when a small section of pebble surface measuring 1.6 metres by 1.2 metres was exposed. It lay below the floor level of the house and continued under the north wall foundation and evidently pre-dated the construction of the house foundation. A small sherd of black glazed pottery dating no later than the beginning of the 17th century was recovered from a sealed deposit of grey silt above the pebble surface. The implication of this is that the surface pre-dates the early 17th century.



Pebble surface which lay below the floor of the house. Removal of one of the foundation stones shows the surface continuing beneath the foundation stone and consequently has to be earlier than the house

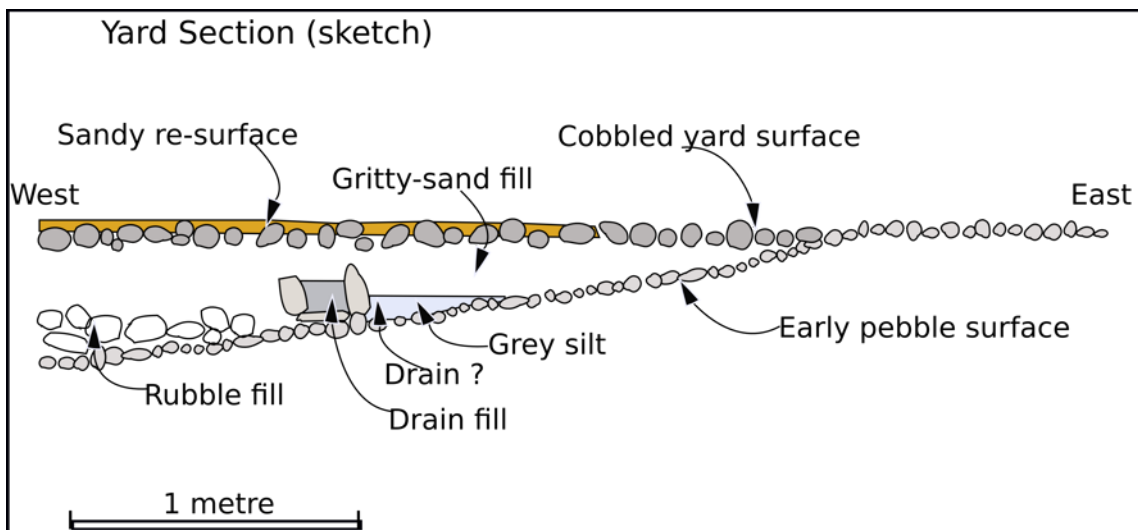


Black glazed pot sherd dated to no later than the early 17th century. The silt deposit in which it was found lies directly on top of the pebble surface

In subsequent seasons we exposed more of this surface which extended to the east as far as the workers house. Beyond the east gable deep excavations to install drains would have removed the surface. There was no continuation inside the building to the west of the internal wall of the living room but this must have been removed by later activity since to the north of the house the surface continues to the west.

In 2018 we opened a large area to the north of the house. This exposed a yard surface belonging to the house (see Update 3).

The pebble surface formed the eastern end of the yard but then dipped down to the west. In order to create a level surface a rubble fill of water worn stones followed by a fill of gritty-sand was used to elevate the area and finally surfaced with cobbles to form continuous yard surface.



On the evidence we have so far it would seem that the pebble surface is forming a bowl shaped feature. As yet we have only exposed the eastern side. In 2019 we will be opening the area to the west to reveal the continuation of the surface and hopefully determine its purpose.



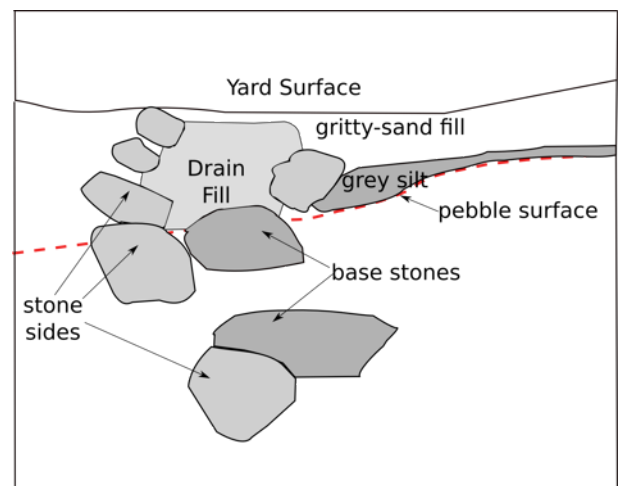
Pebble surface looking south-west.

Early Drain

During the excavation of the yard surface a drain like structure was revealed. The base and side walls were built from water worn stones with a flat profile but no capstone. The base stones were set on the pebble surface. It was only about 60 cm in length but continued as a cut into the southern end of the pebble surface. It is thought that its purpose was to remove water from the south across the slope of the pebble surface to discharge into the Trub Brook to the north. Presumably by the time it was built the pebble surface had ceased to have its original function. The drain had remained in use long enough for a deposit of grey silt to build up on the eastern side. It was from the bottom of this silt layer that the sherd of early black glazed



Section across early drain. The drain was roughly built and has partially collapsed. The darker drain fill can be seen and to the right the grey silt deposit in which the early pot sherd was found.



Key to photograph showing the principal features

Ditch

On the north side of the early pebble surface a ditch like feature 0.7 metres wide had been cut into the natural gravelly-sand and partially filled with cobbles. It's depth below the surface and north-south alignment suggest that it might be early. We should learn more in the coming months.



Ditch with cobble stone fill. The photograph is taken looking west with north to the right.

Medieval Pottery

In October last year we discovered a single sherd of gritty ware dating to the 14th or early 15th century. It came from the backfill of a drain trench (*drain 1*). We know that the drain trench was constructed around 1880. In archaeological terms the pot sherd is “residual” i.e. does not belong to the context in which it was found. The pot sherd has sharp edges and had clearly come from deep in the trench on or just above the natural geology. This is encouraging since it probably originated close to where it was found.

A single sherd of medieval pot doesn't necessarily mean that there is medieval structures or occupation on the site. We need more evidence. The site occupies a large flat area close to the Trub Brook and could have had many uses in the past. Hopefully we will learn more in the 2019 season.



Medieval gritty ware of 14th or early 15th century date.

The updates summarise our findings from four seasons of excavation at Hopwood. For the first time we continued to work through the winter and the next update will summarise our findings and bring everyone up to date in time for the new season.