

## **SBDR14 REETH TEST PIT 05**

**Owners:** Judith and Alan Mills

**Address:** Sorrel Sykes, Reeth

**Date:** 17/18 May 2014

**Dug By:** Judith Mills, Richard Farmery, Andrea Dixon, Linda Parrott, Ben Wilkinson

### **Position:**

- To the north of the top lawn, adjacent to the front of Sorrel Sykes, Reeth.
- 54°23'16.83"N, 1°56'29.78"W

### **Pit Description:**

- The pit was dug and recorded in accord with the HEFA guidelines
- The first 4 contexts were very similar. They consisted of a dark brown top soil with very little stone. Towards the bottom of context 4 large stones started to show through the soil.
- The soil became more sandy & orange as the pit got deeper.
- A circular pattern of stones appeared in context 6 but the stones did not seem to go into context 7. However below these stones in context 8 a flat curved surface was discovered. This occupied one corner of the test pit and disappeared under the walls of the pit. Only a small portion of the stone therefore could be seen. There was a discussion between the archaeologists and a geologist, with no agreement, as to whether this was natural or man-made. It was not possible to explore this further.
- Fire waste, mortar, pipe stems, window glass and animal bone were in contexts 2-6 inclusive.
- A medieval barrel lock and a short section of chain were found in context 7; both have been conserved and will be placed in the Swaledale Museum. There were no other finds in this context.
- Boulder clay with sand and gravel was reached at a depth of ca. 80 cm; this was considered to be the natural.

### **Finds:**

Test Pit 5: 62 sherds, 238grams

There were five small sherds of medieval pottery from this pit. One was a rim of a jug or cistern. It was partly oxidised but may be from a later reduced ware vessel, as the area round the rims of these vessels is often not fully reduced. Context (5) contained a relatively large sherd of a creamware plate rim with typical moulded decoration. There was other fragments of creamware in (2) and (3), at least some of them from the same vessel. Other late 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> century types present were white salt-glazed and brown-glazed stoneware, Staffordshire type slipware and three sherds of local post-medieval pottery. There is a relatively small proportion of ceramics which are necessarily later than 18<sup>th</sup> century in this pit as the redwares could all be part of this 18<sup>th</sup> century group.

### **Conclusions:**

- The dig went well. The same diggers were present on both days and worked well together and were well supplied with tea and coffee making a pleasant atmosphere.
- The pit was completed at 5 pm Sunday.
- Sorrel Sykes has been dated to c1600 although possibly built on earlier foundations and with reused medieval timbers in the attic.
- From 1840-1930 Sorrel Sykes was part of "the Master's house" for the Reeth Union Workhouse. After 1930 it would appear to have been unoccupied for a while before being renovated in the 1950's

- The presence of pottery from all periods 13th C onwards indicates continuous habitation in the vicinity from medieval times and would support the belief that there was a house close by in medieval times.

**Thanks:** to Judith and Alan Mills

written by: Judith Mills  
date: 11<sup>th</sup> October 2014

## TP 05 Finds Catalogue

context	type	count	weight	dating	comment
1	ungl red	1	2		rim
2	creamware	6	6	18th	
2	early red	1	3	17th	may be an import
2	stoneware	1	8	15th/16th?	looks German but could be later
2	medieval	2	8	13th	both orange-red, 1 has traces gl
2	yellow	1	7		with white and blue bands
2	whiteware	5	7		misc. 1 has light and dark brown bands
2	red slipped	3	14		
2	pipe stem x 1	0	0		
2	china	1	2		
2	?	1	2		possibly tin glaze without the glaze
3	white salt gl stoneware	2	8	18th	
3	creamware	3	8	18th	part of plate
3	local post med	2	16	17th/18th	rim
3	pipe stem x 1	0	0	17th	
3	black gl red	1	3	17th	
3	ungl pink	1	1	?	
3	whiteware	9	9		misc transfer and painted
3	red slipped	3	30		rim
4	creamware	1	27	18th	plate rim with moulded dec
4	brown gl st	1	1	18th	with fine ribbing ?Notts type
4	salt gl st	1	7	17th/18th?	English copy
4	local post med	1	9	17th/18th	
4	red slipped	3	7		
4	red	2	11		
4	post med reduced?	1	3		glazed int and ext, not sure
4	pipe stem x 1	0	0		
4	black gl red	1	4		shiny - could be 18th
5	Staffs type	1	1	17th/18th	mixed slips
5	pipe stem x 1	0	0	17th	
5	medieval	1	3	14th/15th	rim of jug/cistern part oxidised
5	medieval pink	1	1	13th/14th	
5	pipe stem x 2	0	0	?	
5	red slipped	1	19		bottom of strap handle attachment
5	burnt	1	3		whiteware?

context	type	count	weight	dating	comment
5	black gl red	1	2		rim
6	medieval buff	1	1	13th	
6	red slipped	1	5		
6	pipe stem x 1	0	0		

## Pottery Analysis

### Notes on the Pottery:

For the purposes of the pottery analysis, we have defined the following historical periods;

Roman – 1st to mid-5th Century

Medieval – 13th and early 14th Century

Late Medieval - mid 14th, 15th and 16th Centuries

Generally speaking a meaningful date bracket cannot be applied to a large proportion of the sherds recovered from the test pits. Other than the medieval material present there are other datable types such as tin-glazed earthenware, white salt-glazed stoneware and creamware, but red earthenware, of all types, for instance, has a long life and particularly when only small fragments are present, is not closely dateable. Where it is associated with say, creamware or tin-glazed earthenware it could well be 18th century. As far as plotting the distribution of sherds in date categories is concerned there are obvious problems with assigning the redwares and for most this has not been done. However, some Test Pit summaries may indicate how strong the earlier dating indicators are. Anything with no date against it in the catalogue falls into the general late post-medieval background noise category.

I have tried to keep abbreviations to a minimum in the catalogue to avoid long lists of explanation. Those that are there, or have crept in, I hope will be obvious (eg. gl for glaze or glazed, misc for miscellaneous, int (inside) and ext (outside)).

Some explanations of wording used in the 'types' column

- red slipped is the standard post-medieval kitchenware with internal white slip coating
- red on its own is any plain glazed red earthenware
- black glazed red is very difficult to date especially in small fragments as there are black-glazed redwares in the later 16th and 17th centuries as well as throughout the 18th and into the 19th century.
- whiteware refers to the refined table wares of 19th century onwards which can be transfer printed (eg. willow pattern), sponged etc.
- yellow, i.e. yellow ware refers to the 19th century type of pottery often found with white slip bands and sometimes 'mocha' decoration. Used for good quality kitchenware, and vessels such as chamber pots. Sometimes within this category are other non-white glazed fragments which appear to be generally the same type, i.e. the background glaze colour may be buff or pale pinkish-buff rather than yellow.
- local post-medieval and local red are, as the names suggest, wares probably with a fairly local source. Similar types elsewhere in North Yorkshire are called Ryedale wares. The fabric can vary from light red to orange and buff or be partly reduced grey. Glazes often have a greenish tinge. Typical vessels would be bowls, dishes and jars.
- creamware is as described! The date assigned is 18th century. It is still around in the early 19th c. but is basically a mid to late 18th type. There is a general chronological trend to a lighter colour glaze so small later fragments may just get included with 'whiteware' in the table. Conversely when

only small flakes are present dating must be open to some doubt.

- pearlware begins in the later 18th century and continues into the early 19th gradually becoming 'whiteware' as the blue-grey tint to the glaze lightens - again a broad chronological trend. Mostly decorated, frequently with shell edge rim mainly in blue. It is not easy to identify in small fragments.

Jenny Vaughan October 2014