

SBDF15 FREMINGTON TEST PIT 48

Owners: Ron & Sue Bailey
Address: Fremington Mill Farm
Date: 16th May 2015
Dug By: Ric Carter, Brian Dunn, Lesley Wolsey, Rob & Sue Nicholson

Position:

- Latitude 54°23'15.52"N Longitude 1°55'56.41"W
- The Test Pit was located centrally in the second lynchet down from the top of the field outside any possible building platform areas.
- This was the second pit to be dug in this field and the following positional notes are reproduced from TP47 written by David Brooks
- The Test Pit was dug in the field extending west from the western most road in Fremington.
- The field has at sometime in the past been ploughed and several lynchets running East-West are clearly visible.
- Today the field is used for grazing.
- The majority of the site is dominated by the middle limestone of the Lower Carboniferous period, part of one of the Yoredale Cyclothem. Sandstone is also evident and has been used in the walls and revetting of the lynchets and platforms.
- Topographic surveys of the field have shown possible house platforms - maybe crofts and tofts, - concentrated towards the eastern ends of the lynchets. Is this a deserted medieval settlement?

Pit Description:

- The pit site was marked out and de-turfed
- The excavation was recorded in line with HEFA guidelines and all spoil was sieved.
- The underlying soil layer reached a depth of 30 cms before turning to the familiar natural clay and although some isolated stones were present the pit was rather unremarkable.
- A small amount of pottery was recovered in the soil layer but no other finds.
- The pit was closed at 50 cms.

Finds:

Test Pit 48: 13 sherds, 30 grams

Only three contexts were excavated in this test pit. Six, possibly seven, of the sherds of pottery were medieval. None of the other fragments were necessarily later than the 18th c.

Conclusions:

A rather small amount of pottery was recovered from this test pit the overwhelming majority of which was medieval. The absence of significant amount of later pottery tends to support the theory of deserted medieval settlement in this area.

Thanks:

We are grateful to Ron & Sue Bailey for their continued support in allowing access to their fields for surveying and also the digging of this test pit. As always, the diggers were enthusiastic and committed.

written by: Rob Nicholson
date: 28th October 2015

TP 48 Finds catalogue

context	type	Count	weight	dating	comment
2	black gl red	1	1		
2	medieval buff	1	3	13th/ 14th	
2	ox med?	1	4	?	very worn
2	red	2	1		brown gl, thin
2	red slip dec	1	2	17th/ 18th	small hv
2	TVB	1	6	13th/ 14th	yellow gl with small bit of cu green
3	?	1	1		small flake could be early pm.
3	black gl red	1	0		small
3	late medieval reduced	1	4	14th/ 15th	
3	med oxidised	3	8	13th/ 14th	main sh is sooted base

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

Notes on the Pottery:

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. For most redwares a date category has not been assigned. 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 (lpm) background noise category.

A few more abbreviations have crept into the catalogue. I hope most will be obvious (eg. gl for glaze or glazed, misc for miscellaneous, int (inside) and ext (outside)). Let me know if not.

Some explanations of wording used in the 'types' column

- *red slipped* is the standard post-medieval kitchenware with internal white slip coating
- *red slip dec* means there is trailing or banding rather than an overall slip coat
- *red* on its own is any plain glazed red earthenware
- *black glazed red* is 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 kitchenwares, 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 wares probably with a fairly local source. Similar types elsewhere in North Yorkshire are called Ryedale and Osmotherley type 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.

Apart from the late reduced wares the medieval pottery present was mainly buff, buff/pink or more iron-rich orange/oxidised wares. Although there was much that was not clearly diagnostic most of this material can probably be described as Tees Valley ware.

Jenny Vaughan
September 2015