SBDF15   FREMINGTON TEST PIT 51

Owners: Roger and Pat Pettican
Address: West Cottage, Draycott Hall, Fremington
Date: 20th & 21st June 2015
Dug By: Miles Johnson, Sue Nicholson, Ann and John Russell, Lesely Wolsey, Amy Mitchell, Matt Bulimore, Delyth Rennie, David Brooks

Position:

- Latitude
  54°23'11.07"N Longitude 1°55'51.25"W
- Development on the Draycott Hall site is believed to have started in the 16th C.

- West Cottage stands behind the Hall and, although there is little documentary information available, is believed to have been part of the servants' quarters and domestic working areas.

- West Cottage is thought to have been the laundry and the present garden of the cottage to have been a working yard.

- The whole site is sloping and has probably been excavated to give a level site for the buildings.

- The TP was sited in the lawn area at the top of the back garden, which sloped roughly NE/SW

Pit Description:

- Removal of the grass and top layer or two of soil was difficult due to large amounts of crushed gravel.

- We were advised that there had been a garden bench sited where the TP was dug and that the bench stood on a bed of crushed gravel.

- Below the top layers of soil was what can best be described as a mixture of sub-soil, clay and sandstones.

- After about contexts 3/4 the nature so of the earth changed to a fine, friable soil mixed with stones - largely sandstone.

- This layer continued until context 9 when clay patches began to appear, heralding the onset of the natural.

- The southern section only of context 9 was excavated and this continued to expose the natural - clay and sandstone.

- As we had reached the natural and there had not been any finds since context 7, the pit was closed.

Finds:

Test Pit 51: 82 sherds, 280 grams
Over half the fragments recovered were unglazed red earthenware, probably relatively recent flower pot. However, there were some indications of earlier activity, including a pipe stem from the lowest level reached with a large bore. Nothing was clearly identifiable as medieval.

Finds were located principally in the first 4 contexts, corresponding to the top soil and so called sub-soil layers. Little was found in the layers of Hill Wash.

The Finds largely comprised glass, pottery, terracotta pot, coal, bone, and tobacco pipe sections. Two pieces of worked flint were recovered from context 3. The distribution of the finds across the contexts indicated that
the TP was excavated in disturbed ground.

Conclusions:

- The earth in the TP appeared to have been disturbed, this is confirmed by the distribution of the Finds.

- The earth in the upper contexts, seemed more akin to sub-soil and out of place as it was above what was considered to be hill wash, which had more of the characteristics of top soil.

- A possible interpretation of this is that the hill wash did form the top soil until about the 16th C when building began. The material dug out from the building site was subsequently spread on top of the hill wash to help level the area and to dispose of the material.

Thanks:

Our thanks to Roger and Pat Pettican for the loan of their immaculate garden and for their generous hospitality. Thanks also to all who helped to dig this interesting test pit.

written by: David Brooks
date: 23rd June 2015

TP 51 Finds catalogue

context	type	Count	weight	dating	comment
1	?	1	2		burnt
1	china	1	3		dark green ext surface
1	ungl red	39	159		prob flower pot
1	util late pm	3	14		1 is chip of mixing bowl with int white slip
1	whiteware	13	26		some blue dec ?thin sponge
1	whiteware	1	2		transfer print
2	china	1	2		as in [1]
2	red slipped	1	5		
2	ungl red	4	8		
2	white salt gl stoneware	1	1	18th	
2	whiteware	4	3		
2	whiteware	1	2		rim transfer print
3	black gl red	1	8		everted bowl rim
3	china	1	29		prof of saucer/shallow dish
3	med/p med	1	3	13th/17th!	Pale orange fabric with some gl one side. Not sure
3	red slip dec	1	2	?17th	slip flaked off
3	util/yellow	1	2		late pm kitchen ware
3	white salt gl stoneware	1	1	18th	
3	whiteware	1	1		
4	china	1	2		rim as before
4	ungl red	1	1		
4	white salt gl stoneware	1	2	18th	prob all from TP are one ves (small hv).

context	type	Count	weight	dating	comment
4	yellow	1	1		
5	pipe stem x1	0	0	18th?	
6	ungl red	1	1		flake
7	pipe stem x1	0	0		large bore

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