

SBDF15 FREMINGTON TEST PIT 52

Owners: Gordon Walker

Address: Brambles

Date: 20th June, 2015

Dug By: Rob Nicholson / Anne Jowett / Sheila Ickringill / Jackie Snow / Ric Carter / Jim Rollinson

Position:

- Latitude 54°23'16.73"N Longitude 1°55'52.48"W
- Pit location is in the field west of Brambles residence.
The pit is approximately 50 yards west of the modern barns and on the same terrace as the upper barn.

Pit Description:

- The field west of Brambles residence is steeply sloping, with several distinct terraces or lynchets over the length of the field. The pit was placed on the third terrace west of the barns and west of the location of the trench containing the water pipe. The terraces have half circular protrusions or mounds of earth below them at even intervals. The owner Mr Gordon Walker stated that the flat area above the upper barn was found to be a cobbled floor or yard when they had dug the trench for the power line. They had found green glazed pottery in this location. The lowest terrace is composed of the spoil from the construction of the barns. There had been a wall across the field below the second terrace, and the land below this had been employed as a garden.
- The weather threatened rain, and delivered two heavy showers before lunch. The team were assisted by several hens and two cockerels. The horses came to inspect the excavation - the black gelding was seen standing behind the diggers yawning - so obviously not an thrilling equine past-time.
- The dig progressed quickly, the top three contexts were predominantly soil, stones only starting to appear in the third context. Finds were numerous in the first three contexts - of note a metal item possibly a small spur, medieval pottery and some brown and cream slip-ware that may be Cistercian ware. Context four had less finds but there was a ferrous item -nail head or hob-nail, and pottery - Splash glaze (1500). Context six had no finds - when context six was started the west side of the pit had what appeared to be a broken sandstone "floor", the east side was still mainly soil. When this was dug into the sandstone layer was removed and sub soil / clay was reached. On the east side of the pit a layer of shale was uncovered at the bottom the context. Dividing the sub soil and the shale was a narrow layer of vertical sandstone.
- The natural was reached at a depth of 60 cm

Finds:

Test Pit 52: 46 sherds, 123 grams

Only a few small fragments from this test pit were clearly late post-medieval (i.e. 19th century or later). The majority were medieval buff and pink fabrics or a mixture of the two. These are Tees Valley ware types. The lowest level reached (context [5]) produced only medieval pottery. There was one small sherd of Cistercian ware and a few fragments of other early post-medieval wares (see catalogue).

Conclusions:

The conclusions that can be drawn from this test pit is that there is evidence of occupation from medieval times.

Thanks:

Thank you to Gordon Walker for allowing the group to excavate the test pit on his land

written by: Anne Jowett

date: 3rd July, 2015

TP 52 Finds Catalogue

cont xt	type	Cou nt	weig ht	datin g	comment
1	pearlw	1	1		rim
1	whitewar e	1	0		
2	medieval buff	2	3	13th/ 14th	
2	whitewar e	1	0		small!
3	Cistercia n	1	3	16th c.	Appl strips not rouletted
3	local pm?	3	17	17th/ 18th	pink (oxidised) fabric with green, green-brown gl.
3	medieval pink	3	8	13th/ 14th	1 looks to have [worn] applied blob so poss TVB.
3	medieval ?	4	2	?	small worn frags
3	red	1	3		light red, fairly hard, not sure what this is
4	medieval buff	4	17	13th/ 14th	
4	medieval oxidised	8	22	13th/ 14th	incl rim
4	medieval ?	4	2	?	small worn scraps
4	post med	1	1	17th/ 18th	small chip of base but has yellow gl int and dark brown ext, poss Staffs type
5	gritty med	1	4	12th/ 13th	red brown gritty fabric
5	medieval buff	4	13	13th/ 14th	
5	medieval pink/buff	6	21	13th/ 14th	TV type

cont xt	type	Cou nt	weig ht	datin g	comment
5	reduced green gl	1	6	13th/ 14th	Not late med type

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