

SBDF14 FREMINGTON TEST PIT 55

Owners: Paul Stokes
Address: Rose Cottage, Fremington
Date: 18th July 2015
Dug By: David Brooks, Marion Donnelly, Sheila Ickringill, Tom Saunders, Michelle, Carl and Thomas Sutcliffe, Jane Towler

Position:

- Latitude 54°23'13.17"N Longitude 1°55'55.91"W
- Rose Cottage (or a building on its site) and the road alongside to the east (running approximately north-south connecting High and Low Fremington) are shown on mid nineteenth century maps
- The house and garden are approximately 600mm lower than the adjacent road
- To the west of the garden and house is a field, the garden and field are separated by a stone wall approximately 2 metres high
- The test pit was dug in the garden to the south of Rose Cottage approximately 2 metres from the south elevation of the cottage and approximately 3.6 metres away from the field wall and in a grass lawn area
- A Lidar image of the field adjacent to Rose Cottage suggests a deserted medieval settlement with what appear to be tofts and crofts evident. Test pits (TP47 & TP48) dug in the field support this. Did this settlement extend to Rose Cottage?

Pit Description:

- Context 1 – comprised top soil with a small amount of stones
- Context 2 – again soil with about 20% small stone inclusions
- Context 3 – was as Context 2 but with a distinct band of loose angular gravel uncovered running approximately parallel to the south elevation of the house and about 400mm wide
- Context 4 – the gravel continues at this level with a distinct edge to a trench cut through the surrounding soil. The gravel includes non-local material, slate, granite etc and crushed pebbles
- Context 4+ - this was the final Context and, on the advice of YDNP archaeologist, the west end of the gravel part was excavated to approximately 700mm below ground level, where some larger local stones were uncovered. However, being unconsolidated the surrounding gravel began to “flow” into the area being excavated and the dig was abandoned at this point for safety reasons.
- The natural level was therefore not reached in this pit.

Finds:

Test Pit 55: 65 sherds, 283 grams

Nearly half the fragments from this test pit were unglazed red earthenware, probably flower pots. There was one small fragment of local early post-medieval type.

Conclusions:

The site of the test pit had probably been disturbed locally by groundworks carried out in the last 20 to 30 years, in particular the gravel feature described in Context 3, 4 and 4+ above which appears to be some sort of land drainage. The gravel feature is of no archaeological significance.

Thanks:

SWAAG are very grateful to Paul Stokes for granting permission to dig this Test Pit and to the members and volunteers who helped in the dig.

written by: Sheila Ickringill
date: 20th July 2015

TP 55 Finds Catalogue

con text	type	Co un t	wei ght	datin g	comment
1	black gl red	1	3		rim ?small jar
1	china	2	4		1 has sprig
1	local pm	1	2	17th/ 18th	
1	red	2	3		
1	red slipped	2	49		bowl rim
1	ungl red	3	5		?
1	whitew are	3	6		2 tp (1 is brown) and one painted (rim)
2	black gl red	1	3		?part of T pot knob.
2	china	2	1		
2	misc lpm	1	3		variant of yellow ware dark brown slip line, white and light brown bands
2	pearlw ?	1	2		
2	pipe stem x1	0	0		
2	red	1	4		
2	ref black	1	1		lathe cut? Reduced fabric
2	ungl red	9	46		prob all flower pot
2	whitew are	9	13		misc - some tp, some paint
2	yellow	1	4		

con text	type	Co un t	wei ght	datin g	comment
3	pipe stem x1	0	0		
3	ungl red	19	124		
3	whitew are	5	7		2 largest are tp
3	yellow	1	3		

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