

SBDR14 REETH TEST PIT 06

Owners: Brian Cherry
Address: Sowden Cottage, Reeth
Date: 19/20 July 2014
Dug by: Brian Cherry, Hannah Carnley, Nigel Bailey, Janette Carnley, Alan Mills, Pat Chamberlain, Sandy Carter

Position:

- In the passage between the Congregational chapel and Sowden Cottage, Reeth, to the South of the front door.
- 54°23'17.43"N, 1°56'32.16"W

Pit Description:

- The pit was dug and recorded in accord with the HEFA guidelines.
- The weather on Saturday was poor with heavy rain on and off but fortunately the owner erected a tent over the pit so work continued unhindered.
- Well-laid cobbling was found in one half of the pit at a depth of c10-12cm. This part of the trench is referred to as B. The cobbles had been removed in the other half of the trench, A, in order to lay a service trench, resulting in a mix of subsoil and backfill in this section of the pit.
- A large ceramic drain pipe was discovered in part A at about 65 cm.
- The pit was completed by 2pm Sunday

Finds:

Test Pit 6: 51 sherds, 269 grams

Contexts had been split into As and Bs. Where there was pottery from both the A and the B a note has been made in the comment field (in case it was thought significant).

There was no medieval pottery from this test pit but there was a small piece of early 17th century German slipware from context (5). The presence of white salt glazed stoneware in the top three contexts, most came from context (2), is a clear indication of 18th century activity. None of the pottery is necessarily particularly late.

Conclusions:

- Sowden Cottage is an old property. A survey by the Reeth Vernacular Buildings Study Group concluded that the earliest part of the building dates from ca. 1600 with possible evidence of earlier medieval foundations at its northern end. It predates the Congregational Chapel.
- The neat cobbling was thought initially to be the cobbled surface of the lane which clearly pre-dates the building of the Chapel. Indeed the front door of the house (and others on the same alignment to the South eg East View) face onto this lane, providing a route from Back Lane into the centre of the village.
- It was hoped that the cobbled surface would provide a sealed context with finds identifying the laying of the cobbles perhaps around the time of the initial construction of the building.
- The small number of finds under the cobbles in section B were a mix of 17th/18th and 19th C, principally contemporaneous with the initial construction of the Chapel in late 18th C and its major extension in the mid-19th C. It would seem that the cobbled surface was re-laid after the Chapel was built in its present form around 1860.
- It is surprising and disappointing that no medieval pottery was found although one piece of early 17th C pottery was found in the service trench perhaps contemporaneous with the initial construction of Sowden Cottage.

Thanks: to Brian Cherry and family including Hannah and Janette Carnley who both helped with the digging.

written by: Alan Mills
date: 15th October 2014

TP06 Finds catalogue:

context	type	count	weight	dating	comment
1	black gl red	1	76		base, gl internally
1	pearlware?	3	6	l.18th/e.19th	slight blue tinge to gl
1	red	6	85		thick walled, dark red, internal brown gl
1	white salt gl stoneware	2	5	18th	base
1	whiteware	2	8		
2	black gl red	1	1		2b - chip of rim or handle
2	brown gl st	1	4		2b - chipped neck/top
2	china	1	2		2b - rim with transfer print
2	pearlware?	2	3	l.18th/e.19th	2a - slight blue tinge to gl
2	tin-glazed	1	1	17th/18th	2b - rim with blue paint
2	white salt gl stoneware	2	5	18th	2a - part of plate flange with seed moulded dec
2	white salt gl stoneware	6	30	18th	2b - plate rim with seeds as in '2a'
2	whiteware	3	2		2b
2	whiteware	2	2		2a - one has bit of mocha slip dec
3	red slipped	1	5		
3	white salt gl stoneware	1	3	18th	
3	whitew	1	1		
4	buff stoneware	2	9		
4	china	1	1		grey transfer
4	red	1	1		possibly early but really small
4	whiteware	6	5		
4	yellow	1	10		this is the 19th c. yellow gl ware.
5	china	1	0		tiny
5	German slip	1	2	e. 17th	chip from rim of Weser dish
5	whiteware	1	1		
7	yellow	1	1		

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