

SBDR14 REETH TEST PIT 21

Owners: Public Space

Address: Reeth Green

Date: 9.6.14

Dug By: SWAAG Schools Team, Children of Reeth and Gunnerside School

Position:

- On Reeth Green in front of the Burgoyne Hotel, SSW of water pump and E of the waste bin.
- 54*23'21.50"N 1*56'31.39"

Pit Description:

- The pit was dug following HEFA guidelines
- 100% of spoil was sieved
- The pit was dug and supervised by a SWAAG team plus a maximum of 6 children per shift in four one-hour shifts over the course of the day
- The children were actively involved in digging, sieving and washing finds with constant adult supervision
- In order to shelter the children from the prevailing wet weather, the pit was dug under cover of the tent with the spoil heap just outside.
- Context 1 was grass on the surface and then soil. There was some modern debris eg plastic fuse covers from firework display.
- Context 2 was 80% soil, 20% small stones with some pieces of mortar. There were some modern-looking (not corroded) nails along with clay pipe stem and what was perhaps a metal clog heel iron.
- In Context 3 there was some cobble/ compacted gravel, lime mortar, clinker and charcoal. In the NW corner of the pit was some cobbled surface. Finds included animal bone.
- The surface of context 4 was 20% compacted subsoil/ clay and 80% stone. Only one small piece of animal bone was found.
- The natural was reached at a depth of 500cm

Finds:

Test Pit 21: 48 sherds, 84 grams

The biggest group of pottery from this pit were thick sherds of black glazed redware which are basically undateable. A few small fragments of creamware were present but no very clear indication of any pre-19th century activity.

Conclusions:

- Finds seemed limited to 19th century with "natural" reached at a relatively early stage.
- Perhaps this area has always been part of the Green and so the ground has been left relatively undisturbed.

Thanks:

Thanks to children, teachers and staff of Reeth and Gunnerside School for their enthusiastic participation in today's activities, of which the actual dig was a part.

Our thanks are also due to Reeth Parish Council and the Green Wardens for allowing us to put test pits in Reeth Green.

written by: Sue Nicholson

date: 18.10.14

TP 21 Finds Catalogue:

context	type	count	weight	dating	comment
1	china	2	2		
2	whiteware	14	6		
2	creamware	3	3	18th	
2	red slipped	1	1		
2	pipe stem x 1	0	0		
3	black gl red	17	58		chunky chips with gl one side
3	red slipped	4	4		
3	creamware?	4	8	18th?	
3	whiteware	3	2		

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