

SBDR14 REETH TEST PIT 39

Owners: Phil and Julia Atkinson
Address: Leaside, Reeth
Date: 9th September 2014
Dug By: Phil and Julia Atkinson, Judith Mills, Mike Keenan, Shirley Gale, William Manning, Barry Ward and David Brooks plus occasional supervision from Alan Mills.

Position:

- Leaside is located in the southern part of Reeth, in a complex, which includes the Poor House.
- The house is not on the 1839 tithe map but in 1865 the Reeth Poor Law Union provided a “womens’ lying in ward” which soon moved into Leaside. It may eventually have become the infirmary.
- The western end of the house is the old section. A newer eastern part of the house was built in more modern times.
- The lawn and garden at the eastern end of the house would seem to have been built up and leveled from the original (?) land surface by c1 metre.
- 54°23'17.02"N, 1°56'28.64"W

Pit Description:

- Dug in the lawn at the eastern end of the house
- The excavated earth was very easily worked and sieved.
- The Sections of the test pit show that the earth in the upper levels of the pit was uniform in nature comprising largely a soil and gravel mix. Towards the bottom the layers contain an increasing proportion of large and very large stones.
- Down to 70cm the earth was largely soil and gravel (soil min 85%, small/medium stones 10% and less). From Context 8 there was an increasing proportion of sand and larger stones.
- Context 9 onwards the main components of the earth were sand and increasingly large stones (sandstone) with few if any finds.
- Excavation of the complete pit area was stopped at 95cm (between contexts 10 and 11), although the eastern half of the pit was taken down to 110cm before digging was stopped completely.
- In the final trench the earth comprised a mix of sand, grit, clay and a large (the main) proportion of large stones. Although it was not boulder clay we considered that we have reached “natural”.

Finds:

Test Pit 39: 166 sherds, 447 grams

There were five fragments of late medieval pottery from the lower contexts and four possibly earlier sherds from higher up. Fragments of early post-medieval wares (17th/18th century) were scattered throughout as well as sherds of creamware and tin-glazed earthenware suggesting there could have been more or less continuous activity in this area. The majority of the sherds are broadly 18th/19th century. The few fragments of clay pipe stem confirm an early post-medieval element.

Conclusions:

Finds ranging from late medieval, and possibly earlier together with a majority of finds from the 18th/19th century and their distribution in the column indicate more or less continuous activity in the area. The few fragments of clay pipe stem confirm an early post-medieval element.

Thanks:

Our thanks to Phil and Julia for permitting us to dig up their lawn and for their hospitality; the drinks and biscuits were very welcome. Thank you.

Written by: David Brooks

Date: 15th October, 2014

TP 39 Finds Catalogue:

context	type	count	weight	dating	comment
1	china	1	2		transfer printed
1	whiteware	17	11	19th	
1	factory slip	3	5	19th	
1	red	2	2		?early
1	red slipped	1	4		
1	black gl red	1	4		
1	brown gl stoneware	1	2		rim
1	?	2	2	?	
1	pipe stem x 2			?18th c.	
2	medieval	2	4	13th/14th	fairly non-descript!
2	buff earthenware	1	5	17th/18th	base – brown internal gl.
2	tin-glazed?	1	1	17th/18th	very abraded
2	ungl red	1	7		
2	whiteware	13	12		
2	brown gl whiteware	1	5		
2	creamware	2	2	18th	
2	factory slip	1	2		
2	miscellaneous	2	2		
2	burnt	1	1		
2	pipe stem x 2			18th?	
2	pipe bowl frag				
3	black gl red	3	6		
3	red slipped	1	7	18th ?	splayed base with ext slip
3	whiteware	22	31		some transfer print
3	pink lustre	1	0	19th	
3	ungl red	2	6		
3	red	1	2		
3	Staffs?	1	4	e.18th c.	buff post-med earthenware
3	stoneware	1	5		grey
3	miscellaneous	4	6		
3	pipe stem x 1			17th/e.18th	
3	pipe stem x 1			18th/19th	
4	red slipped	1	10		
4	creamware	3	3	18th	
4	brown gl stoneware	1	4		
4	red	2	5		
4	whiteware	10	10		various

context	type	count	weight	dating	comment
4	pipe mouthpiece x 1			18th/19th	
5	red slipped	1	11		rim
5	medieval	2	10	13th	pale pink and orange/buff
5	tin-glazed	1	3	18th	light blue gl
5	Staffs?	1	2	18th	brown with yellow blob
5	whiteware	7	6		some transfer print
5	creamware	4	4	18th	
5	ungl red	2	3		
5	red	1	1		flake
5	buff earthenware	1	3	17th/18th	base – yellow internal gl.
6	china	1	6		Rim – undecorated
6	tin-glazed	1	1	17th/18th	blue decoration
6	creamware	1	2	18th	
6	Local red?	1	8	17th/18th	rim with green/brown gl
6	black gl red	1	14?		base
6	whiteware	7	12		willow pattern rim
6	pearlware?	1	3		shell edge rim
6	yellow ware	1	10	19th	
6	red slipped	1	1		
6	pipe stem x 2			18th	
7	creamware	6	10	18th	moulded rim
7	red	5	35		1 has slip band
7	creamware?	1	2		with fine ribs and green gl ext
7	whiteware	5	4		
8	late medieval	1	50	14th/15th	Thick walled mid-grey, green gl, oxidised internally
8	ungl red	1	3		flake
8?		1	1	19th?	pinkish earthenware, light brown gl
8	pipe stem x 3			17th/e.18th	
8	pipe stem x 3			18th/19th	
9	late medieval	3	64	14th/15th	as in layer above
9	Local red?	1	4	17th/18th	red fabric with greenish gl
9	pipe stem x 1			18th/19th	
10	late medieval?	1	2	15th/16th	

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