

SBDR15 REETH TEST PIT 42

Owners: Reeth Parish Council
Address: The Green, Reeth
Date: 9th June 2015
Dug By: SWAAG members and Richmond Methodist School

Position:

- Latitude 54°23'20.95"N Longitude 1°56'31.55"W
- Grass area outside Post Office

Pit Description:

- The pit was dug following HEFA guidelines
- 100% of spoil was sieved
- Context 1 was grass
- Context 2 was soil with no features. Finds included a padlock, the bowl of a CTP, post-Med pot, metal objects, glass fragments, a ceramic marble, coal, coke and clinker/ slag.
- Context 3 had 15% stones and was 80% clay. The SW corner was compacted fire debris and there were some small stones in the SE corner. Finds included clay pipe stems, nails, pot, glass, animal bone, burnt bone, bonfire slag and a copper-alloy button.
- Context 4 was clayey soil with no features. There were some fragments of glass and some charcoal.
- Context 5 was the same clayey soil. Only one small piece of animal bone found.
- Context 6 was clayey soil with two large stones embedded in the S. half. No finds.
- The decision was taken to close the pit at this stage as the natural had been reached.

Finds:

Test Pit 42: 42 sherds, 137 grams

Although most of the pottery appeared to be 19th century or later there were indications of earlier activity in this test pit, including a small piece of Staffordshire type slipware and a clay pipe stem with large bore.

Conclusions:

This test pit had been sited close by an area of interest from the 2014 season but in the event did not yield the anticipated finds and so in some ways could be regarded as a rather disappointing pit. The children however worked hard, had fun and learned a lot about the process of archaeology and teamwork.

They especially enjoyed discussing what we might have found and what those finds might have indicated.

Thanks:

Thanks are due to Richmond Methodist Primary school pupils and teachers, the SWAAG members who came and helped out on the day and Reeth Parish Council for allowing us to put pits on Reeth Green.

written by: Sue Nicholson

date: 27.10.15

TP 42 Finds catalogue

cont xt	type	cou nt	weig ht	dati ng	comment
2	black gl red	1	3		
2	red	2	7		1 sherd has flaked but counted here as 1
2	red slipped	1	2		
2	ungl red	1	1		
2	whiteware	5	8		1 sherd has flaked but counted here as 1
3	black gl red	4	54		rim sherd has flaked but counted here as 1, also a base
3	brown gl whiteware	2	8		
3	pipe stem x6	0	0		at least one looks 17th/18th c.
3	red	6	13		incl small strap handle
3	red slipped	6	23		bowl rim
3	Staffs type	1	1	18th c.	
3	ungl red	1	1		
3	whiteware	11	13		
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