

**Post-Excavation Assessment of the Small Finds from The Hagg, Swaledale,  
North Yorkshire (HFS19)**

**December 2019**

**Sally Gerrard BA, MA with contributions by James Gerrard BA, MA, PhD, ACIfA**

**ArchaeoGenie Report Number 2019/05**

## **Introduction**

A small assemblage of metal finds, daub and stone objects was submitted for assessment. These have been catalogued and described below.

## **Glass and Beads**

<48> [59] Segmented opaque blue glass bead. 3mm in diameter, 10mm long. This is of Guido's (1978, Fig 37) Type 1 and is appropriate to a late Roman date (Guido 1978, 91-93)

US A3 A fragment of translucent glass tinged green, with bubbles. A thickish walled body shard. Probably Roman and worth showing to a glass specialist.

## **Perforated roundels**

Perforated roundels or discs made of pottery or other materials have been traditionally interpreted as spindle whorls. Crummy (1983, 67) has emphasised the need for spindle whorls to conform to four characteristics. Firstly, that the hole diameter should not be smaller than 5mm; secondly, that the diameter and thickness be even and the sides smooth; third, that the perforation be central and fourthly, that the disc be no larger than 50mm. These criteria have been accepted by Cool (2000, 52-53) as a means of distinguishing spindle whorls from other perforated discs.

The two perforated roundels from Hagg conform to three of these four criteria. <52> is not quite round and <70> has an off-centre hole. Thus these objects cannot be identified as spindle whorls. They may have served as counters, or weights.

<52> [82] A perforated lead disc. It is slightly sub-circular in shape and 27mm in diameter. The central hole is straight sided and 7mm in diameter. Weight 19g.

<70> [80] A perforated annular stone. It is abraded and 35mm in diameter. The hole is off centre and is 9mm in diameter. Weight 11g.

## **Iron Objects**

There are thirteen iron objects. One of these is a knife and the remainder are of unknown date and function, most of which are small fragments. There is an incomplete iron needle from [123]. The age of this object is difficult to establish, although it is possible that it is Roman in date. A single fragment of slag was recovered from context OB2/A3, probably indicating the presence of metalworking on site.

## **Knife**

<53> [117] An incomplete iron knife with a straight back and tang of Manning's (1985, 114) Type 11a. This is a common Roman knife form and such blades were probably multi-purpose tools.

## **The Nails**

The assemblage contains a total of 14 identifiable nails using Manning's (1985) typology. There are four nails from context OB2/A2. Two of these are rectangular-headed Type 1B general purpose nails; and the remaining two are incomplete fragments. There are eight nails from context OB2/A3; including four Type 1B nails and two Type 4 nails. The remaining two nails are incomplete shank fragments, one of which is bent, perhaps suggesting extraction. Finally, context OB2/A4 has produced two incomplete, rectangular-headed Type 1B general purpose nails.

## **Hobnails**

There are five hobnails in the assemblage; four from area A3 and one from area A2. The presence of hobnails reflects the use of Romanised footwear, even on low status, rural upland sites.

## **The Daub**

The assemblage was quantified by fragment count, weight and dimension. There are 21 fragments of daub weighing in total 589g, with an average weight of 28g, and a range of 4 – 216g. The daub ranges in thickness from 8-30mm, with an average thickness of 15.5mm. The fabric of this material appears to be homogenous. Wattle impressions are visible on the interior of one fragment; and finger marks are observed on a large fragment of daub. There is visible organic material present in several fragments, which is probably the remains of straw used to strengthen the daub.

The daub is presumably evidence of structures on site.

## **Utilised stones**

Area 2 produced nine stones that exhibited evidence of utilisation as tools. In all cases this utilisation involved the wearing down of sharp edges as if these objects had been used as burnishers, smoothers or as hones. All of the objects are roughly palm sized and sit alongside other similar objects found in previous seasons.

This season's stone can be classified into four broad categories according to their shape. The first category comprises narrow sub-rectangular stones. The second category comprises wide sub-rectangular stones with heavily rounded corners. The third category includes tapering stones and the fourth category miscellaneous shapes.

The function of such objects remains a mystery. They may have been used for preparing organic materials like foodstuffs, textiles and leather. Alternatively, some examples may have been used as hones or for polishing metals, or for burnishing.

### Category 1

<61> [123] incomplete. 60x20x35mm

<50> [59] incomplete 60x42x19mm

<51> [59] complete, heavily worn at one end. All edges worn smooth. 117x38x21mm

### Category 2

<45> [59] / F25 Complete with edges and corners rounded smooth; pebble-like. 120x65x26mm

<47> [59] / F25 Complete, heavily worn. One edge is severely worn down, as if it had been repeatedly used. 136x63x18mm

<62> [124] incomplete. 90x68x24mm

### Category 3

<66> No context number. Complete, teardrop shaped stone, worn smooth 125x19x13mm

### Category 4

<44> OB2 Small, almost square. The sides are convex, edges are rounded and worn smooth, surfaces are flat. 51x37x14mm

<65> No context number Complete, large triangular stone. Reminiscent in form of a triangular loomweight. The edges are worn smooth. 115 x 115 x 38mm

### **Unknown function**

<72> [137] A lead tube, crimped at one end. 5mm in diameter, 10mm long.

<46> F25 [59] A length of copper-alloy wire folded over. 85mm long. 1.5mm in diameter.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

This is a small assemblage that contains nothing that is out of the ordinary. The finds are typical of what one might expect for a Romano-British upland rural site and focus on utilitarian and domestic along with personal adornments.

The knife, the glass bead and the perforated discs should be illustrated in any publication.

The utilised rocks may require illustration. They should be examined in conjunction with similar objects from previous seasons and shown to a geologist to confirm their lithology.

The glass fragment should be shown to a glass specialist.

### **References**

Cool, H. 2000 'The parts left over: material culture into the fifth century', in *The Late Roman Transition in the North*, (eds.) T. Wilmott and P. Wilson. Oxford: 47-65.

Crummy, N. 1983 *The Roman small finds from excavations in Colchester 1971-1979*. Colchester, Colchester Archaeological Reports 2.

Guido, M. 1978 *The Glass Beads of the Prehistoric and Roman Periods in Britain and Ireland*. London, Society of Antiquaries of London Research report 35

Manning, W. 1985 *Catalogue of the Romano-British Iron Tools Fittings and Weapons in the British Museum*. London, British Museum Press.

## The Daub

Context	Grid Sq.	Length	Width	Thickness	Weight	Comments
129		60	39	20	22	Fragment of daub
129		55	40	20	20	Fragment of daub
124		39	36	15	28	Fragment of daub
OB2	A4	90	50	16	33	Fragment of daub
OB2	A4	90	55	30	74	Irregular fragment of daub containing fine organic matter, perhaps the remains of grass or straw.
OB2	A4	45	40	15	22	Sub-rectangular fragment of daub containing fine organic matter, perhaps the remains of grass or straw.
OB2	A4	45	32	13	11	Sub-rectangular fragment of daub containing fine organic matter, perhaps the remains of grass or straw.
OB2	A4	26	25	12	4	Fragment of daub
OB2	A4	120	60	20	216	Large irregular fragment of daub with long indentations to outer surface, perhaps finger indentations from applying the daub.
OB2	A4	68	58	14	45	Irregular fragment of daub containing fine organic matter, perhaps the remains of grass or straw.
OB2	A4	55	42	10	23	Irregular fragment of daub with parallel indentations to outer surface, presumably from wattle.
OB2	A4	46	17	14	10	Fragment of daub
OB2	A4	47	38	12	12	Fragment of daub
OB2	A4	40	25	14	9	Fragment of daub
OB2	A4	46	20	13	7	Fragment of daub
OB2	A4	45	30	18	18	Fragment of daub
OB2	A4	40	20	20	11	Fragment of daub
OB2	A4	35	20	15	8	Fragment of daub
OB2	A4	30	25	15	5	Fragment of daub
OB2	A4	28	22	8	5	Fragment of daub
OB2	A4	36	27	11	6	Fragment of daub

