

SBDR14 REETH TEST PIT 38

Owners: Paul & Rosemary Hawksworth.

Occupiers: Barry and Carol Dorman

Address: Wellbeck, Reeth

Date: 19/20 July 2014

Dug by: Judith Mills, Barry Ward, William Manning, Emma West, Hilary Fawcett, Sheila Keenan, Mike Keenan

Position:

- The southern section of the front lawn of Wellbeck, Reeth.
- 54°23'23.57"N, 1°56'21.92"W

Pit Description:

- The pit was dug and recorded in accord with the HEFA guidelines
- The first 3 contexts were very similar, each consisting of a dark brown top soil with very little stone. There were a number of finds including creamware, mortar, pipe stems, window glass and animal bone.
- In contexts 4 and 5 the soil became slightly lighter and the number and size of stones gradually increased. Some larger white pieces appeared which may have indicated liming or lime mortar. Finds included red earthenware and green glaze.
- In context 6 some larger stones appeared at the southwest corner and an area of possible charcoal at the north east corner. Two large pieces of pot were recorded in this context. Both were reduced earthenware, one with obvious green glaze.
- The soil became more orange in context 7. On removing some of the loose stones it was discovered that 1 “stone” was in fact an upturned base of a pot matching one found in the previous context.
- In context 8 there was what appeared at first sight to be a wall; on closer examination it was felt to be natural. The soil was became very orange in colour and sandier at this level.
- The sandy soil with gravel and boulder inclusions reached at a depth of ca. 80 cm. was considered to be natural.

Finds:

Test Pit 38: 48 sherds, 1024 grams

The weight of the pottery from this test pit is mostly accounted for by four joining fragments from the base of a large late medieval vessel in a reduced (grey) fabric. Three were from context (6) and one from (7). The size and condition of these sherds strongly suggests a primary deposit. The likelihood is that this is from a large jug or cistern. Other forms are made but in much smaller numbers. This seems to be the case at Healey as well as amongst other later reduced ware assemblages. There were two other fragments of late reduced ware from other contexts and another medieval sherd of a pink fabric, possibly earlier but the sherd was quite small. There was some 17th/18th century pottery present, although sherds were very small. However, there was also a fragment of clay pipe bowl and some clay pipe stems of this date.

Conclusions:

- The dig went well. The Saturday diggers were remarkably resilient when considering the appalling weather. The difficulty of writing on the context boards in the wet was overcome by the use of “digital recording” ie fingers! The contrast in the weather between Saturday and

Sunday was extreme; shorts, sunhats and sun protection were the order of the day. The pit was completed by 2 pm Sunday.

- Carol and Barry kept us well supplied both days with drinks.
- Wellbeck is thought to originally have been a shippon (barn / cow house) attached to Sorrel Sykes next door; the latter has been dated to c1600 although possibly built on earlier foundations and with reused medieval timbers in the attic. Wellbeck was added some time later than 1600.
- From 1840-1930 Wellbeck was part of “the Master’s house” for the Reeth Union Workhouse. After 1930 it would appear to have been unoccupied for a while before being renovated in the 1950’s
- The presence of pottery from all periods 13th C onwards indicates continuous habitation in the vicinity from medieval times and would support the suggestion that there was a house close nearby in medieval times.
- The large pieces of Northern Reduced Green glaze (NRG) from a large jug or cistern, possibly from the medieval kiln at Healey, nr Masham, N Yorks, will be placed in the museum.

Thanks: to Barry and Carol Dorman.

written by: Judith Mills
date: 10th October 2014

TP 38 Finds Catalogue:

context	type	count	weight	dating	comment
1	pipe stem	0	0	18th ?	
1	china	1	1		
1	pipe bowl	0	0		very small frag
1	whiteware	6	3		
2	white salt gl stoneware	1	2	18th	
2	local post-med	2	7	17th/18th	rim
2	Staffs	1	1	17th/18th	yellow gl with very tip of dark brown combed dec.
2	black gl red	1	1		flake
2	red slipped	1	3		rim
2	whiteware	10	12		
3	pipe bowl	0	0	l.17th/e.18th	
3	late reduced ware	1	8	15th/16th	
3	creamw	1	2		
3	late pm	1	0		?yellow ware
3	red	1	0		
3	red slipped	2	7		1 main bit
3	whiteware	3	1		
4	pipe stem	0	0	18th?	
4	creamware	1	1	18th	
4	black gl red	1	37		from base
4	red	3	7		2 bits of small strap handle, rim with slip band
4	red slipped	2	49		2 rims
4	ungl red	2	4		
5	pipe stem x 2	0	0	17th/18th	
5	late reduced ware	1	5	15th/16th	
5	medieval pink	1	3	13th/e.14th	
5	red	1	2		
6	late reduced ware	3	369	15th/16th	base, 2 other sherds (joining) have oxidised interior.
7	late reduced ware	1	499	15th/16th	base joins that in 6, large thick walled

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