

SBDR15 REETH TEST PIT 41

Owners: Barbara Buckingham & Vivienne Close
Address: Lane House, Arkengarthdale Road
Date: 10th April 2015
Dug By: Dave Brooks, Jackie Snow, Mike & Sheila Keenan, Ric Carter, Graham Smith, Rob & Sue Nicholson; visited by Shirley Gale, her grandson Harris & a friend.

Position:

- Latitude 54°23'41.35"N Longitude 1°56'45.08"W
- At the back of the conjoined property towards the north west corner of the lawned area

Pit Description:

Given that we had already cancelled our first attempt at digging this pit because of snow showers, gusting winds and freezing temperatures, the glorious sunshine as we arrived in Arkengarthdale was a very welcome sight. The bleating sheep and lambs in the field at the back of Lane House, who obviously thought that we were their morning foddering visit, confirmed that spring had at last arrived.

The pit was to be dug in the back garden belonging to Barbara Buckingham and Vivienne Close, who told us that although the garden had been walled off from the adjacent meadow relatively recently, the property was obviously much older and had been the local clog maker's workshop with an adjacent barn. Adorning their back wall was a variety of metal objects all of which had come from their garden and so we were quite hopeful of finding evidence of earlier settlement activity.

After removing the turf the first context (0-10cm) was made up of a heavy loam with an assortment of modern debris including an electrical fuse and a Newcastle Brown Ale bottle top.

The next two contexts, taking us down to 30cms, contained evidence of later post medieval activity with pottery, remnants of shotgun cartridges, a small amount of bone (some burnt), together with clinker, coal and coke possibly from the clog maker's activity, in an increasingly clay-containing soil.

A few large stones at the bottom of context 3 led us to wonder whether there was some structure present, but alas no, as the next context did not contain any finds and culminated in the local yellow clay which we have come to recognise as the natural layer.

We did remove a further half section into context 5 which just confirmed we had indeed reached the natural and so after the final recording the pit was backfilled.

The natural was reached at a depth of 40cm

Finds:

Test Pit 41 : 127 sherds, 53 grams

There was nothing identifiably earlier than the 19th century from this test pit.

Conclusions:

A rather disappointing pit. Given the age, location and history of the property we were hoping for more evidence of occupation activity.

Thanks:

Are due to the digging team, Barabara and Vivienne for allowing us access to their garden and for the tea, coffee and biscuits.

It was also an idyllic location - a marvellous view over to Fremington Edge and the bleating sheep with their lambs.

written by: Rob Nicholson

date: 11/5/15

TP 41 Finds catalogue

cont xt	type	co unt	weig ht	dati ng	comment
1	red slippe d	1	7		
1	ungl red	1	2		
2	red slippe d	1	2		
2	late pm	1	1		sl yellow gl
2	pipe stem x2	0	0		
2	red slippe d	1	8		rim
2	white ware	22	33		several, incl rim from a tp dish/plate, also some sponged and some plain

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