

## **Identification of pottery from fieldwalking at Countess Close, Alkborough (CCA 2003)**

### ***Alan Vince and Barbara Precious***

Four boxes of pottery were recovered from fieldwalking at Countess Close, Alkborough, by Humber Field Archaeology. The pottery was submitted to AVAC for identification and quantification.

All the Romano-British pottery was identified and recorded by Barbara Precious. Anglo-Saxon and later pottery was identified and recorded by Alan Vince. A high proportion of medieval sherds are likely to belong to wares which have recently been codified by Anne Irving and Jane Young for North Lincolnshire Museum, Scunthorpe. These have been given the temporary code of "MEDLOC" and it is intended that they will be reclassified according to this North Lincolnshire fabric series at no further cost to Humber Field Archaeology during Summer 2004. For all the identified pottery a ware code was assigned together, where possible, by a form code.

All late 18<sup>th</sup>-century or later wares were not identified but were recorded as "LPM" with a sherd count and weight.

### **Roman Pottery**

Two hundred and sixty-eight sherds of Roman pottery were recovered (Table 1). All were small abraded sherds, several of which had lost their surfaces and were consequently impossible to identify with any certainty.

Much of the pottery cannot be closely dated, consisting of greywares and oxidized wares. The remainder includes some types which are more diagnostic. There is a small quantity of pottery which dates to the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries but the only definite 1<sup>st</sup>-century sherd is sherd of South Gaulish Samian ware, and even that is not a certain identification. Similarly, there are two possible sherds of Les Matres de Veyres Samian ware, produced in the first two decades of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, but clearly circulating for much longer in Britain. Six sherds are of various coarsewares, typical of the transition from Iron Age to Roman potting traditions (IASH, NAT, VESIC) and all likely to be late 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>-century in date. There is a larger quantity of pottery which is of 2<sup>nd</sup> century date, including greywares, grey finewares and Samian ware (GFIN, PART and SAMCG) .

There are also a handful of sherds which definitely date to the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> centuries. These include Nene Valley colour-coated ware, Swanpool Mortaria and Oxidized wares and Dales Shelly ware (NVCC, MOSP, SPOX and DWSH).

In some cases a narrower date range is possible for a sherd because its form can be determined and this is given in a separate field in the database but on the basis of the fabrics alone we can say that there is probably activity represented in the collection from the early 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> centuries, with the majority in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and the possibility of activity starting in the later 1<sup>st</sup> century.

*Table 1*

cname	full name	earliest date	latest date	Nosh	NoV	Weight
BB1	Dorset Black Burnished ware	120	410	1	1	6
CR	Cream-bodied ware	50	250	1	1	1
DWSH	Dales Shelly ware	250	400	2	2	23
GFIN	Fine Greyware	50	200	13	12	70
GMIC	Micaceous Greyware	50	200	1	1	3
GREY	Romano-British greywares	40	400	195	164	1300
GRFF	Fairly Fine greyware	40	400	3	3	20
IASH?	Iron Age Shelly ware?	40	150	1	1	2
MOSP	Swanpool Mortaria	250	400	1	1	29
NAT	'Native' Wares	40	150	4	4	33
NVCC	Nene Valley Colour Coated	200	400	5	5	9
OX	Oxidized ware	40	400	29	27	158
OX?	Oxidized ware	40	400	1	1	21
OXF	Fine Oxidized ware	40	400	3	3	4
PART?	Parisian-type ware?	125	200	1	1	5
SAMCG	Central Gaulish Samian Ware	100	200	6	6	21
SAMCG?	Central Gaulish Samian Ware?	100	200	3	3	4
SAMLM?	Central Gaulish Samian ware (Les Matres de Veyre)	100	120	2	2	32
SAMSG?	South Gaulish? Samian ware	40	100	1	1	3
SHEL	Romano-British shelly wares	40	400	7	7	75
SHEL?	Romano-British shelly wares?	40	400	3	3	9
SPOX?	Swanpool Oxidized ware	300	400	1	1	88
VESIC	Vesicular ware	40	200	2	2	7

There is no apparent variation in the size of the sherds found with date and presumably therefore they all arrived on site through similar pathways and have been subject to similar breakage and weathering.

Seventy-nine sherds could not be assigned to a form (NK in Table 2) but for the remainder jars were far and away the most common class present, followed by bowls and beakers. All other forms were represented by four or less sherds each. The lack of amphora and flagons and the low quantity of mortaria points to a low level of display and simple food preparation techniques.

*Table 2*

Broad Class	Nosh	NoV	Weight
Jars	124	105	850
NK	79	69	282
Bowls	23	23	403
Closed	16	11	82
Beakers	14	14	21
Open	8	8	69
Samian	4	4	44
Platters	2	2	39
Lids	2	2	5
Mortaria	1	1	29
Dishes	1	1	4
Cups	1	1	3

### Early Anglo-Saxon Pottery

A single sherd of Early Anglo-Saxon pottery was recognised, from square D.14. The fabric is a standard East Midlands ware, ESGS, which probably originated on the east side of the Ancholme valley. Examples are known from several other sites in the area, including Flixborough.

### Mid Saxon Pottery

No examples of Maxey-type ware were identified.

### Anglo-Scandinavian Pottery

Twenty sherds of Anglo-Scandinavian date were identified. Most are Torksey ware (TORK) or Torksey-type ware (TORKT) or Stamford ware (ST) with a couple of sherds which may be Thetford-type ware (THET). As a group, these sherds appear to belong to the later Anglo-

Scandinavian period, i.e. late 10<sup>th</sup> to mid 11<sup>th</sup> century, and there are no sherds which can be definitely assigned to the later 9<sup>th</sup> to mid 10<sup>th</sup> centuries (such as Lincoln Gritty ware, early Torksey wares, York A ware or York D ware) and the Stamford ware sherds are all from vessels with an external drab yellow or light green glaze, typical of the mid 11<sup>th</sup> century and later.

*Table 3 Anglo-Scandinavian wares by terminus post quem*

cname	850	880	950	1000	Grand Total
TORK	12				12
TORKT	5				5
THET		2			2
LFS			32		32
ST				4	4
Grand Total	17	2	32	4	56

### Medieval and post-medieval Pottery

One hundred and seventy-two sherds were identified as being of post-conquest medieval date. Of these, two might be Yorkshire Gritty ware (YG?) of late 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century date, 32 are of Lincoln Fine-shelled ware (LFS) which is present both before and after the conquest and forms the majority of 12<sup>th</sup>-century coarsewares in north Lincolnshire. Several of the sherds contain a high rounded quartz sand content and might be the products of a centre further north than Lincoln (NLFS) whilst the remainder were probably made close to Lincoln and exported through there.

There are a number of later 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>-century types present, including Scarborough ware (SCAR), Doncaster Hallgate B ware (DONCB), Beverley glazed wares (BEVO, not subdivided into BEVO1/BEVO2), Beverley sandy wares (BEVO SANDY) and a single sherd of Northern Gritty ware of the type found in West Yorkshire (NGRITTY).

Later medieval wares are mainly Humberware of West Cowick type (HUM) or with sandier fabrics for which a Lincolnshire source is likely (HUMB). Coal Measures whitewares are present (CMW) and these include some which are visually similar to the products of the Firsby industry, to the south of Doncaster, and some which are probably Rawmarsh projects and of 16<sup>th</sup>-century date. A single sherd was identified as a Nottingham Green-glazed light-bodied ware of later 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>-century date (NOTGL). Much of the Humberware has lost its surface and so it is not possible to distinguish 16<sup>th</sup>-century from earlier sherds. The general impression is that there is continuous sequence of medieval to post-medieval wares present and with similar quantities of late 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> and later 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>-century wares. Thus, apart from the change in pottery sources from a local and Beverley-dominated assemblage to a Humberware-dominated assemblage there is no other sign of disruption either side of the Black Death.

*Table 4 Medieval wares by terminus post quem*

cname	950	1000	1050	1100	1150	1250	1350	1450	Grand Total
LFS	32								32
ST		4							4
YG?			2						2
LSW?				4					4
LSW				1					1
MEDLOC					53				53
BEVO					26				26
BEVO SANDY					5				5
MTILE					5				5
DONCB					4				4
NGRITTY					1				1
SCAR					1				1
HUM						20			20
HUMB						20			20
CMW						6			6
NOTGL						1			1
LCGR?							1		1
RAER								1	1
BL									37
GRE									16
BOU									6
CSTN									5
Grand Total	32	4	2	5	95	47	1	1	251

Likewise, there is a complete sequence of transitional late 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> century and post-medieval wares (Table 00). The earliest of these are Cistercian ware (CSTN) and Bourne D ware (BOU). Although theoretically the Blackwares (BL) and glazed red earthenwares (GRE) might occur in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century it is most likely that they are considerably later, and for the Blackwares may well be contemporary in part with the unrecorded late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>-century wares.

Four sherds of Frechen stoneware were found. They all appear from their curvature and wall thickness to come from 'belarmine' bottles of early to mid 17<sup>th</sup>-century date rather than mugs which have a wider date range. Eighteen sherds of brown-glazed earthenware (BERTH) were identified. They probably date to the later 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and early to mid 18<sup>th</sup>-centuries. Three sherds of late Humberware were identified. These too could be extremely late (LHUM). Four sherds of Chinese porcelain were identified. They are probably all manufactured in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century but typically occur in assemblages of much later date since such wares, especially plates (which these four are), were inherited as heirlooms.

*Table 5 Transitional and Post-medieval wares by Terminus post quem*

cname	1500	1530	1550	1620	1630	1640	1650	1680	1690	1700	Grand Total
BL	37										37
GRE	16										16
BOU	6										6
CSTN	5										5
FREC		4									4
BERTH			18								18
LHUM			3								3
BL?			1								1
CHPO				4							4
STRE					12						12
TGW						1					1
SLIP							7				7
STCO							3				3
STEM							1				1
STCOAR							1				1
STSL								3			3
STMO									5		5
SWSG										1	1
ENPO										1	1
Grand Total	64	4	22	4	12	1	12	3	5	2	129

A single sherd of tin-glazed ware was present, probably because such wares would not survive long in ploughsoil. It is from a plain plate with a wide flange and is probably of mid 17<sup>th</sup> century date. Wheelthrown slipware vessels of probable Staffordshire origin were fairly common and include types of later 17<sup>th</sup>, early 18<sup>th</sup> and mid 18<sup>th</sup>-century date (STRE, STCO, STEM, STSL). In addition some of the Blackwares are visually identical to Staffordshire products (STCOAR). Unsourced slipwares were also present (SLIP). 18<sup>th</sup>-century finewares include a single piece of white salt-glazed stoneware (SWSG) and a sherd of Worcester Porcelain with a deep cobalt blue surface and gold leaf decoration (ENPO). The latter could as easily be a 19<sup>th</sup>- as an 18<sup>th</sup>-century example.