

Assessment of the finds from The Retreat, York (OSA02 WB37)

Thirty-three sherds of Roman pottery, a whetstone, and a handful of later pottery, clay tobacco pipe and glass was recovered from a watching brief at The Retreat, York, undertaken by On-Site Archaeology (Site code: OSA02 WB37). These finds indicate activity on the site in the Roman period and again in the 17th century and later.

Description

Ceramic Building Material

Fragments of brick and flat roof tile were recovered from the site together with pieces of unidentifiable brick/tile. Definite fragments of medieval or, more probably, post-medieval brick and flat roof tile were found in context 1008 and possible fragments in contexts

Clay tobacco pipe

A clay tobacco pipe stem was recovered from context 1002. the bore diameter indicates that it is of 17th-century date.

Copper Alloy/Composite

The copper alloy face of a multi-part button was recovered from context 1005. The object is a hemispherical or dome shape and has iron corrosion products around the edge and on the underside. Traces of solder survive around the edge on the underside of the object. This is probably part of a composite button with a copper alloy face set in an iron mount and with a copper alloy loop in that mount. It is probably of 18th or 19th-century date.

Glass

A sliver of dark green glass from a tall bottle (SF5), of mid/late 18th-century or later date was found in context 1002. A partially melted fragment of light green window glass from context 1005 (SF4) is probably to be dated to the 17th century.

Iron

An iron ring was recovered from context 1008. The ring had a sub-rectangular cross-section and was wrought from a single string of iron whose ends overlap. The corrosion products include coal dust and ash together with an amorphous lead alloy lump, visible on the X-ray plate (OSA02 WB37 Plate 1). The presence of early modern material in the same context together with this association with coal ash suggests an early modern (ie late 18th century or later) date.

Pottery

Romano-British

Thirty-three sherds of Romano-British pottery were recovered from the site, from three contexts: 1005 (2 sherds dating to the 2nd century); 1008 (2 sherds dating to the later 1st or 2nd century, or later) and 1012 (29 sherds, the latest of which is 3rd/4th century). The range of wares present (Table 1) shows that the collection is similar to those from the colonia/fortress of York itself rather than the surrounding countryside. It includes finewares such as oxidized ware pentice-moulded beakers, Ebor whiteware and Samian ware.

Table 1

Ware	Name	Sherds
BURNISHED	Black Burnished ware 1	1
	Black Burnished ware 2	3
	Black Burnished ware 2?	3
	Crambeck B11	2
	Grey B3	2
CALCITE	Knapton	2
EBOR	Ebor 1	4
	Ebor 2	1
	Ebor 3	1
GREY	Grey	3
	Local grey ware	9
OXID	Pentice-moulded beakers	1
SAMIAN	CGS	2
WHITE	Ebor white	1
Grand Total		35

The range of forms present is dominated by jars but includes dishes, a Samian tableware, a flagon and a lid (Table 2). The absence of bowls is noticeable but in an assemblage of this size may simply be an accident of recovery.

Table 2

Broad Class	FORM	Nosh	NoV	Weight
Unknown	Unknown	2	2	10
Samian	18/31-31	1	1	3
Dishes	D	3	3	45
Flagon	FP	1	1	84
Jars	J	12	11	250
Jars	J/B	5	3	212
Jars	J/K	4	4	7
Jars	JC	4	4	27
Lids	L	1	1	31

Late/Post-medieval

Sherds of Cistercian ware and Humber ware were recovered from unstratified contexts. These probably date to the 16th to mid 17th century.

Early Modern

Sherds of transfer-printed whiteware and a locally-produced (?) flowerpot were recovered from unstratified contexts. They are probably of 19th-century date. A sherd of Nottingham stoneware from context 1008 may be of similar date, although this ware was first produced in the late 17th century.

Stone

A fragment from a possible whetstone (SF2) from context 1005 has a tapering conical shape with a flat end. The material appears under x20 magnification to be an artificial compound and there are slag specks on the surface which suggest that iron-rich inclusions have been heated to a high temperature. It is, thus, likely to be a modern hone made from an artificial material.

Assessment

The Romano-British pottery indicates activity on the site throughout the Roman period although only one stratified Roman deposit, 1012, was excavated. The *tpq* for the filling of this feature is 3rd/early 4th century, CP3/4A in Monaghan's ceramic phases for York ({Monaghan 1997 #113}). Including pottery from later deposits only the earliest and latest phases of Roman pottery in the York area are not represented. This indicates long-lived activity on or near the site rather than an isolated feature.

There is no material from the site which is definitely of medieval date but a handful of finds indicate activity in the 17th century: the burnt window glass, the Cistercian ware, possibly the Humber ware and the clay tobacco pipe stem.

There then follows another likely hiatus before the deposition of early modern material, none of which need be earlier than the 19th century.

Appendix

Action	Context	Description	Cname	Form	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Subfabric	Part	Use	Condition	class
		U/S	CSTN	CUP	1	1	3		BS			CERAMIC
		U/S	HUM	BOWL	1	1	88		BS			CERAMIC
		U/S	LPMLOC	FLP	1	1	11		BS			CERAMIC
		U/S	TPW	PLATE	1	1	3		B			CERAMIC
		1002	PMTIL	BRICK/FLAT 1	1	1	8				FRAGMENT	CBM
XRAY	1005	DOMED HEAD	COPP	BUTTON	1	1	1				BROKEN	COPP
		1005	PMTIL	BRICK/FLAT 2	2	2	17				FRAGMENTS	CBM
		1005	YATE01	L	1	1	31		BS			ceramic
DR?	1005	RIM NECK	YATW01	FP	1	1	84		R			ceramic
		1005	ZDATE									ceramic
XRAY	1008		IRON	RING	1	1	64		COMPLETE			IRON
		1008	NOTTS	BOWL	1	1	1		BS			CERAMIC
		1008	PMTIL	BRICK	2	2	120				FRAGMENTS	CBM

Action	Context	Description	Cname	Form	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Subfabric	Part	Use	Condition	class
	1008		PMTIL	BRICK/FLAT 3	3	10					FRAGMENTS	CBM
	1008		PMTIL	FLAT	1	1	27					CBM
	1008	THIN WALL	YATE01	J/K	1	1	2		BS			ceramic
	1008	THIN WALL; OX EXT PALE INT	YATE05	J/K	1	1	2		BS		ABR	ceramic
	1008	CP1B-2+	ZDATE									ceramic
	1012	BASE; FINE VARIANT BZZ UNDER	YATB01	D	1	1	6		B			ceramic
	1012	BASAL UNDEC	YATB02	D	2	2	39		BS			ceramic
	1012	RIM CF THAMES SIDE KENT	YATB02	JC	1	1	11		R			ceramic
	1012	NO DEC ; FAB CF B2	YATB02?	JC	3	3	16		BS			ceramic
	1012		YATB03	J	1	1	10		BS			ceramic
	1012	2 HORIZ GROOVES; FINE GREY CF CRAMB	YATB11?	J	2	1	21		BS			ceramic
	1012	THINNER	YATE01	J/K	1	1	1		BS	BURNTIN		ceramic
	1012	THICK	YATE02	J/B	1	1	15		BS			ceramic

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Action	Context	Description	Cname	Form	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Subfabric	Part	Use	Condition	class
1012			YATE03	J/K	1	1	2		BS			ceramic
1012		QUITE FINE Q; POSS B11?	YATG01?	J	6	6	135		BS			ceramic
1012		QUITE FINE Q;2 SPACEDBODY GROOVES	YATG01?	J	1	1	35		BS			ceramic
1012		PITTED	YATG01?	J/B	2	1	78		BS		ABR	ceramic
1012		COARSE Q	YATG08		1	1	3		BS			ceramic
1012		THICK LARGE VESS;PITTED;COARSE Q	YATG08	J/B	2	1	119		BS		ABR	ceramic
1012			YATK02	J	1	1	8		BS			ceramic
1012			YATK02?	J	1	1	41		BS		LEACH	ceramic
1012			YATO00		1	1	7		BS	BURNT		ceramic
1012		BASAL	YATS03	18/31-31	1	1	3		BS		ABR	ceramic
1012		CP3-E4	ZDATE									ceramic
1012		SAM NOT EXTRACTED; DATE ON K2	ZZZ									ceramic