

A sherd of medieval pottery from Newport, Gwent (BFM03)

A sherd of pottery was recovered from a site at Blackdown Farm, Marshfield, Newport, during fieldwork by Foundations Archaeology (Site code BFM03, Context 404).



Figure 1

The sherd is probably from a large, handmade jar or cooking pot and seems to be part of the sagging base. There is a slight blackening of the outer surface which is consistent with the vessel's use as a cooking pot.

The fabric is oxidized, dark brown with a darker core (due to the incomplete removal of carbon from the fabric during firing). It was tempered with a medium-textured sand composed of subangular grains of quartz up to 0.5mm across and larger grains of a sandstone and dark brown iron-rich clay pellets. The sandstone is a greywacke, containing mixed grains varying from less than 0.2mm across to 2.0mm. The groundmass contains moderate quartz silt and sparse muscovite grains, up to 0.2mm across. The characteristics of this fabric indicate an origin in south Wales and are typical of products from Glamorgan, which must include those produced at potteries in Cardiff. However, the ware could have been produced over a wider area since the geological characteristics of the fabric are widespread.

Such vessels were probably made from the middle of the 12th century (replacing Bristol-made coarsewares and early products of the Forest of Dean area) into the 13th century (when they were themselves replaced by wheelthrown types with finer-textured fabrics, including those produced at Cardiff) but both the earliest and latest dates of production are unknown in detail.

