

## **Assessment of pottery from Slingsby School, Slingsby, North Yorkshire (OSA03 WB19)**

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Six fragments of pottery were recovered from a watching brief at Slingsby School, Slingsby, North Yorkshire, carried out by On Site Archaeology (Site Code OSA03 WB19) together with a single fragment of ceramic building material. The pottery ranged in date from the later 12<sup>th</sup>/early 13<sup>th</sup> century to the late 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century whilst the ceramic building material is probably of Romano-British date.

### **Description**

The finds came from two contexts: the fill of a large ditch (1005) and an overlying thick homogenous soil (1003).

### **Pottery**

Six sherds of pottery were recovered. Two came from the ditch fill and both of these were of York ware. One is an unglazed jar body sherd and the other is a body sherd from a decorated jug with a plain lead glaze and a vertical semi-circular-sectioned applied strip. It is likely that York ware was produced in the same area of the Hambleton Hills as the later Brandsby-type ware, for which kiln sites are known, but it is also possible that blocks of similar clay were moved southwards to the York area by glaciers and that these were exploited by 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup>-century York potters. York ware was certainly in production by the 1180s as a vessel of this type was found at Lurk Lane in a dated fire horizon, but continued in production, probably to the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Four sherds were recovered from the overlying soil, 1003. Two of these were Brandsby-type ware jug sherds and the other two were Ryedale ware, made in the same area in the later 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Brandsby-type ware sherds are both from vessels with a dark, carbon-rich core and inner-surface. This characteristic seems to be much more common in the later medieval period (late 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries) than earlier and was clearly a deliberate effect. Since the outside of the vessels is often oxidized and oxygen would react with the carbon the interiors of these pots must have been sealed, probably through each pot being stacked on top of the base of the one below, as opposed to the overlapping stacking which was more common and which allowed kiln gases to circulate inside and outside the pots. The Ryedale vessels include a body sherd from a large vessel, possibly a bowl or a large cistern, and a miniature jug or cruet base.

None of the sherds showed any sign of abrasion and it is therefore unlikely that they were subjected to ploughing. Thus, it is perhaps unlikely that the ditch was a field boundary or that the soil was solely the result of ploughing. It would have been possible, however, for the soil to have been the result of late and post-medieval dumping on the site of which only the top was ploughed.

## Ceramic Building Material

A single fragment of tile was recovered from the ditch fill. It was abraded, unlike the potsherds, and is a thick, featureless fragment. The thickness, abrasion and to a lesser extent the fabric all suggest that this is a Romano-British tile rather than a medieval one. If so, it is probably from either a tegula or a brick. The former were used as roof tiles, either on timber or stone Romanised buildings whereas the latter were used either in hypocausts or in walling, both implying a much higher degree of sophistication. Therefore, the tegula identification is preferred.

## Assessment

None of the finds is of particular intrinsic interest and their value comes from what they can tell us about the site. The possible Romano-British roof tile may have been scavenged from the site of a Roman building for reuse but still implies that somewhere fairly close there should be Romanised occupation. The ditch was open until at least the late 12<sup>th</sup> or early 13<sup>th</sup> century and the overlying dumping or soil accumulation is of late and post-medieval date.

**Table 1 List of identified finds**

Context	cname	subfabric	Form	Nosh	NoV	Description	Part	Use	Condition
1003	BRANDSBY AND INT	BLACK CORE	JUG	1	1	PLAIN GL	BS		FRESH
1003	BRANDSBY AND INT	BLACK CORE	JUG	1	1	CUGL	BS		FRESH
1003	RYEDALE		BOWL	1	1	PLAIN GL INT AND EXT	BS	DEPO INT	FRESH
1003	RYEDALE		JUG	1	1	MINIATURE VESSEL	B		FRESH
1005	RTIL		TEG/BRICK	1	1	ID?	BS		ABR
1005	YORK		JAR	1	1		BS		FRESH
1005	YORK		JUG	1	1	PLAIN GL;VERT APP	BS		FRESH