Assessment of the finds from Nostell Priory, West Yorkshire (OSA03 WB37)

Alan Vince

One hundred and twenty finds from an archaeological watching brief carried out at Nostell Priory, West Yorkshire (site code OSA03 WB37), by On-Site Archaeology were submitted for identification and assessment.

The finds come from 40 contexts (Table 1) and ranged in date from the medieval period to the 20th century. They consisted of pottery, clay tobacco pipes (CTP), glass (PMGL), plaster, stone and ceramic building material (CBM) and are described below in alphabetical order.

Table 1

Context	CBM	CTP	PLASTER	PMGL	POTTERY	STONE	Grand Total
1002	1						1
1004					1		1
1006					1		1
1008					2		2
1010					1		1
1012		1			2		3
1014	6	1		2	6	2	17
1016					7		7
1017		1	1	1	1		4
1019					3		3
1021				8			8
1023		2		2			4
1025					2		2
1026	3				3		6
1029					1		1
1030				1			1
1042					4		4
1045					2		2
1047					1		1
1050	5						5
1053	5						5
1058	7				3	1	11
1060	11				8		19
1061	5				1		6
1066					2		2

1079	1						1
1081	2						2
1083	1						1
1085	2						2
1086	18						18
1924					1		1
2000					4		4
2002	1						1
2010	1				1		2
2014	2						2
2015					1		1
2016					6		6
2019					1		1
3006					2		2
4000	3						3
Grand Total	74	5	1	14	67	3	164

Description

Ceramic Building Material

Twenty-eight fragments of ceramic building material were recovered. Four were too small to identify and the remainder were from handmade bricks of late or post-medieval form, flat roof tiles, some with circular peg holes and pantiles (Table 2).

Table 2

Context	BRICK	FLAT	FLAT?	PANT	Grand Total
1002				1	1
1014		4		1	5
1026		1	1		2
1050			1		1
1053			2		2
1058			2		2
1060			2	1	3
1061		1	1		2
1079	1				1
1081	1				1
1083			1		1
1085	1			1	2
1086			1		1
2002		1			1

2010		1				1
2014	1					1
4000			1			1
Grand Total	4	4	16	1	3	28

The fabric of these fragments was determined by examination at x20 magnification using a binocular microscope and four fabric groups were identified (Table 3). All of these fabrics were produced from a mixture of light-firing and red-firing clays, and such variegated clays often use Coal Measures clay, where narrow bands of clay of differing colour occur. However, in most of these clays the clay itself is so indurated that rounded pellets of unworked clay survive in the potting clay whereas no such pellets were noted in these fabrics. Since the site is situated on Coal Measures which extend for many miles in every direction, however, there is little doubt that the clays were obtained from this source. The presence of muscovite in Fabric D but not in Fabrics A to C is likely to be due to the higher firing temperatures of the latter fabrics but the difference in texture also suggests that Fabric D comes from a separate source.

Table 3

Fabric	Description
A	A high-fired fabric with sparse inclusions of iron-rich clay, quartz and sandstone. The groundmass is variegated and consists of poorly-mixed light-firing and red-firing clays.
B	This fabric is similar in firing to A but contains fewer lenses and streaks in the groundmass, being predominantly composed of red-firing clay.
C	This fabric is similar to B but with a lower firing temperature
D	This fabric is lower-fired and coarser in texture than A to C and also has a distinctive micaceous matrix. The iron-rich clay, quartz and sandstone inclusions are more prominent than in fabrics A to C. Like fabrics B and C it contains some streaks of white-firing clay.

An interesting feature of the flat roof tiles is that whereas the typical medieval and early post-medieval flat roof tiles have one surface which was scraped flat by dragging a tool (such as a wooden stick) across the surface whilst the tile is still in its wooden former in the case of the Nostell tiles the top surface is smoothed with the fingers, leaving slight, or in some cases prominent, ridges running lengthwise down the tile. In some tiles the tiler finally wiped his or her fingers across the tile at one end as well. Presumably this technique was used to ensure that the clay reached all corners of the former but it is uncertain why the tiler did not finally scrape the surface flat. This technique may be a regional tradition or it may be the practice of a single tiler. Since the same feature was noted on tiles of fabrics B, C and D this may indicate that all are, after all, the products of a single tilery. The manufacture of handmade bricks and tiles survived into the 19th century although by the end of that century the use of machines was almost ubiquitous. The earliest possible date for these bricks and tiles is likely to be the

16th century. In regions without access to good building stone bricks were adopted earlier, indeed at Bawtry, in South Yorkshire, they were used in building foundations in the 13th century. However, at Nostell, in a region of abundant good-quality building stone they are likely to be much later. In Lincoln, also in a good stone area, the earliest documented use of brick for the superstructure of a building was in the mid 17th century although it had been used earlier for chimney stacks even though only a few miles away, Tattershall Castle had been completely built in brick in the mid 15th century.

The pantiles occur in fabrics A and C and are the only form found in fabric A. One of the tiles has a nib formed in the sanded mould. Pantiles are a 17th-century introduction and became particularly common in the 19th and 20th centuries, especially for outbuildings.

Clay Tobacco Pipe

Five fragments of clay tobacco pipe were recovered. They were all featureless stems and can be roughly dated by the diameter of the bore. One is of late 17th or 18th-century date, two date to the 18th century and two to the 18th or 19th century.

Plaster

One fragment of wall plaster was recovered. The plaster contained sparse angular fragments of coal, presumably through contamination of the lime by coal fuel, and was laid onto a surface containing a high proportion of animal hair. Horse hair was usually employed as a strengthening material in the plaster used in lath and plaster panels from the later medieval period until perhaps as late as the 2nd World War.

Post-Medieval Glass

Fourteen fragments of post-medieval glass were recovered. Eleven come from dark green wine bottles, all of them blown and marvered without the use of a mould. Two are of the short, wide, mallet form which was current from c.1730 to c.1760 whereas nine are from the tall form which was produced from the 1760s onwards until the use of moulds became ubiquitous in the second half of the 19th century.

Two fragments from an octagonal moulded bottle in a light blue glass were recovered. These have moulded lettering on the sides which is too fragmentary for identification. Such bottles were first produced in the mid 18th century but only became common in the 19th century.

A single fragment of clear window glass with a light blue tinge was recovered. This type of glass was introduced in the later 17th century and associated with the use of large square panes which replaced the earliest diamond pane windows of late 16th and 17th centuries.

Table 4

Context	Colour	Form	Sherds	Vessels	Description
1023	DKGR	BOT	1	1	MALLET FORM

1023	LTBL	WIND	1	1	
1014	LTBL	BOT	2	1	OCTAGONAL MOULDED;RAISED LETTERING
1021	DKGR	BOT	8	8	TALL FORM;FREE BLOWN
1030	DKGR	BOT	1	1	MALLET FORM
1017	DKGR	BOT	1	1	TALL FORM

Pottery

Sixty-six sherds of pottery were recovered, representing no more than 51 vessels. They consist of two distinct groups, a collection of medieval pottery, much of it slightly abraded, and a collection of post-medieval and later pottery all but a few sherds of which is of mid 18th century and later date.

Medieval

Twenty-two sherds of medieval or early post-medieval pottery were recovered, representing no more than 16 vessels. Of these, all but three have been classed here as MEDLOC, locally-produced wares of varying fabrics. These fabrics are mainly extremely similar to those of the ceramic building material which, again, bolsters the argument for both being made locally.

Locally-Produced ware (MEDLOC)

Nineteen sherds of these wares were recovered, representing no more than 14 vessels. Most of the sherds had a micaceous, light brown oxidized body with sparse to moderate quartz and sandstone grit up to 2.0mm across. This fabric is very similar to that of the medieval/early post-medieval tile fabric, D. In addition, examples with an abundant quartz and sandstone sand were present. The range of forms represented indicates a late medieval or early post-medieval date. There were two separate unglazed bottle fragments, similar to those produced in Humber ware from the late 14th century onwards, 11 sherds from jars, some glazed and some unglazed. One of the latter was decorated with thumb impressions at the girth. It is not possible to give a close date to small body sherds of this form. There was a single strap handle from a jug with a plain lead glaze (this vessel had a quartz sand temper with no sign of sandstone inclusions) and five sherds from an unglazed vessel with an inverted spinning top profile. It is not clear whether this was a money box or a roof finial since the base, which would distinguish the two, is missing.

These sherds clearly include some of late medieval or early post-medieval date but it is possible that some of the jar sherds, and quite probably the jug handle, are earlier.

Martincamp stoneware (MART)

A single sherd of a white earthenware flask was recovered. These flasks are found in 16th-century and later deposits and from their similarity in form to later, 17th-century, flasks are assumed to be from Martincamp, in the Paris Basin. Recent work by the author on samples of this type from a Spanish shipwreck in Scotland (Kinlochbervie) suggests, however, that they may have some other source. The

type was first recognised in print at Kirkstall Abbey and from its associations there is assumed to be of early 16th-century date or earlier.

Humber ware (HUM)

A single sherd of Humber ware was recovered. This ware was produced at a number of centres in the Humber basin, the best known of which was at West Cowick. The ware was produced from the mid 14th until the early 16th century.

Cistercian ware (CSTN)

A single handle from a cup in Cistercian ware was recovered. The sherd has a dark red, untempered, fabric and a dark purple to black glaze. The handle is of oval cross section with a "keel" or ridge running down the back. This form is uncommon, but present, at Wrenthorpe in the 16th and 17th centuries (1992).

Post-medieval and modern

Forty-three sherds of early modern pottery were found, all of mid 18th-century or later date (Table 5).

Table 5

cname	BOWL	CHP	COFFEE CUP	CUP	DISH	FLP	JAR	MUG	PLATE	SINK?	Grand Total
CONP					1						1
CREA	2								2		4
LPMLOC						2					2
NCBW		1									1
NOTTS		1									1
PEAR	3	1							1		5
PMLOC		5					1				6
SWSG	1			3			1		1		9
TPW				2	1			1	3		7
WEST			1								1
WHITE		2							3	1	6
Grand Total	6	10	1	3	2	5	2	2	1	10	1	43

There were two sherds of unglazed red earthenware flowerpots, probably of local origin (LPMLOC) and five sherds of glazed red earthenware, probably also locally-made (PMLOC). The remainder consisted of factory products whose source in many cases is uncertain. Exceptions are a flanged bowl of Nottingham Stoneware (NOTTS) and a sherd from a Westerwald stoneware chamberpot. The unsourced factory products are English or continental porcelain (CONP), Creamware (CREA), buff-or yellow- ware (NCBW), Pearlware (PEAR), White salt-glazed stoneware (SWSG), Transfer-printed

ware (TPW) and miscellaneous 19th/20th-century whiteware (WHITE). The range of forms represented includes a white salt-glazed stoneware coffee cup, which is datable to the period c.1740-65, a Westerwald stoneware chamber pot, a type which is most common in mid 18th-century groups and a large fragment of whiteware which may be from a sink, bath, urinal or toilet bowl. The latter is presumably of late 19th or 20th-century date.

Stone

Three fragments of fine-grained micaceous sandstone roof tiles were recovered. Two have a light grey colour and one is light brown. These include one with a drilled peg hole. The source of the sandstone is not known in detail but they are either from the Coal Measures or the lower Carboniferous Millstone Grit.

Assessment

The majority of these finds come from Trench 1 and are in a stratified sequence.

The earliest stratified finds are two fragments of CBM, not assigned to a fabric group, from context 1081, a beam slot. These are clearly completely undatable.

Of similar or later phase is a fragment of flat roof tile from context 1083, the fill of a posthole.

Three finds came from features later than beamslot 1081. They are the whiteware MART flask sherd, a sherd of MEDLOC jar and a fragment of CBM (fabric D) of unknown form. On the basis of the MART flask these are dated to the early 16th century or later.

The possible buried soil which seals these features and underlies the later structures in Trench 1, context 1085, produced a fragment of a flat roof tile of fabric D.

The metalled surface, 1061, and the stones set within it, 1086, produced a collection of ceramic building material, mostly flat roof tiles but including one brick. One MEDLOC jar sherd was found. Presumably, the brick dates this surface to the later 16th century or later. The flat roof tiles are probably from a different structure from those sealed below the buried soil.

This surface is covered by a levelling deposit, 1058. This produced the two MEDLOC bottle sherds, and a MEDLOC jar and a collection of building material which includes a stone roof tile and the earliest stratified example of CBM fabric B.

The next finds are associated with a structure with a brick floor. The pottery includes three sherds of PMLOC bowls, as well as MEDLOC jars and the finial/money box object. Most of the ceramic building materials consist of Fabric D flat tiles but include the earliest stratified example of Fabric B as well as a Fabric C pantile. The pantile dates this structure to the late 17th century or later.

The next group of finds is associated with the destruction of this brick-floored building (1047), the robbing of its brick drain (1021), and the construction of the subsequent structure (1030). This phase is datable to the mid/late 18th century through the presence of tall glass bottles in context 1021 and the white salt-glazed stoneware coffee cup and Westerwald chamberpot in context 1016, the yard surface.

The destruction debris from this building (1029) and the subsequent deposit of black cinders (1025, 1026) is dated to the late 18th or early 19th century by the presence of Creamware, Transfer printed ware and the Nottingham stoneware bowl.

Finds from a robber trench fill (1017 and 1019) are dated to the late 18th or 19th centuries, or later, by Pearl ware and a free-blown glass wine bottle.

The later finds from the Trench 1 sequence include no later types and could all be of 19th century date (contexts 1002, 1004, 1006, 1008, 1010, 1012 and 1014).

The finds from Trench 2 are of similar date to those from Trench 1 and include definite late medieval, pre-dissolution, finds from context 2000 (a sherd of Humber ware, associated with later, post-medieval finds

Bibliography

Moorhouse, Stephen and Roberts, Ian (1992) *Wrenthorpe Potteries: Excavations of 16th and 17th-century Potting Tenements near Wakefield, 1983-86*. Yorkshire Archaeology 2 Wakefield, W Yorkshire Archaeol Service.

Appendix

Context	class	cname	subfabric	Form	Nosh	NoV	Description	Weight
1002	CBM	MTIL	FAB A	PANT	1	1	MOULDED NIB	143
1004	EMOD	LPMLOC	S HAEM-COATED SA Q;MICACEOUS GROUNDMASS	FLP	1	1	CYLINDRICAL BODY;FLAT BASE	21
1006	EMOD	TPW		DISH	1	1		10
1008	EMOD	NCBW		BOWL	1	1	FLANGED RIM;BROWN LINE AROUND RIM	4
1008	EMOD	SWSG		PLATE	1	1		6
1010	EMOD	PEAR		BOWL	1	1		62
1012	CTP	PIPECLAY		PIPE	1	1	18TH/19TH C BORE DIAM	2
1012	EMOD	CREA		PLATE	1	1		3
1012	EMOD	CREA			1	1	IRON-RICH PAINT BELOW GLAZE	0.5
1014	CBM	MTIL	STREAKY;FAB A	PANT	1	1		69
1014	CBM	MTIL	MICACEOUS;SLIGHTLY STREAKY;FAB D	FLAT	2	2		123
1014	CBM	MTIL	HIGH FIRED SLIGHTLY STREAKY;FAB B	FLAT	1	1		112
1014	CBM	MTIL	SLIGHTLY STREAKY;FAB C	FLAT	1	1	FINGER GROOVES ALONG TOP	179
1014	CBM	MTIL	FAB D	FLAT	1	1	ROUND PEG HOLE	158
1014	CTP	PIPECLAY		PIPE	1	1	18TH/19TH C BORE DIAM	5
1014	PMGL	PMGL	LTBL	BOT	2	1	OCTAGONAL MOULDED;RAISED LETTERING	8
1014	EMOD	CONP		DISH	1	1		1
1014	EMOD	LPMLOC		FLP	1	1		16
1014	EMOD	PMLOC	A SA Q <0.5MM	BOWL	1	1	WHITE SLIPPED INT;PLAIN GL	100
1014	EMOD	WHITE		PLATE	3	1		15

Context	class	cname	subfabric	Form	Nosh	NoV	Description	Weight
1014	STONE	STONE	LIGHT GREY MICACEOUS SST	FLAT	1	1	ROUND PEG HOLE;DRILLED	47
1014	STONE	STONE	LIGHT BROWN MICACEOUS SST	FLAT	1	1		5
1016	EMOD	SWSG		DISH	3	1	SIMPLE FOOTRING	15
1016	EMOD	SWSG		COFFEE CUP	3	1	SIMPLE FOOTRING;MOULDED REEDED HANDLE;GROOVE IN MIDDLE OF BODY	34
1016	EMOD	WEST		CHP	1	1		5
1017	CTP	PIPECLAY		PIPE	1	1	17TH/18TH C BORE DIAM	2
1017	PLASTER	PLASTER	SPARSE COAL FRAGS		1	1	5MM THICK;APPLIED TO A SURFACE RICH IN ANIMAL(?) HAIR	10
1017	PMGL	PMGL	DKGR	BOT	1	1	TALL FORM	0.5
1017	EMOD	PEAR		PLATE	1	1		11
1019	EMOD	PEAR	INCLUSIONLESS		3	1	GLAZE IS FLAKING OFF AND HAS SLIGHT OPACITY;MIGHT BE UNUSUAL TGW?	5
1021	PMGL	PMGL	DKGR	BOT	8	8	TALL FORM;FREE BLOWN	146
1023	CTP	PIPECLAY		PIPE	2	2	18TH C BORE DIAM	5
1023	PMGL	PMGL	DKGR	BOT	1	1	MALLET FORM	9
1023	PMGL	PMGL	LTBL	WIND	1	1		0.5
1025	EMOD	CREA		PLATE	1	1		3
1025	EMOD	TPW		MUG	1	1		7
1026	CBM	MTIL	FAB D	FLAT	2	2		30
1026	CBM	MTIL	FAB D	BRICK	1	1		17
1026	EMOD	CREA			1	1	SIMPLE FOOTRING;GREEN TINGE TO POOLED GLAZE	3

Context	class	cname	subfabric	Form	Nosh	NoV	Description	Weight
1026	EMOD	TPW		CUP	2	2		3
1029	EMOD	NOTTS		BOWL	1	1	FLANGED RIM	10
1030	PMGL	PMGL	DKGR	BOT	1	1	MALLET FORM	10
1042	MPOT	MEDLOC		JAR	1	1		4
1042	EMOD	PMLOC	A RED CLAY PELLETS <4.0MM	BOWL	3	1	INT BROWN GLAZE;TRACE OF LUG HANDLE	523
1045	PMED	CSTN		CUP	1	1	OVAL-SECTIONED HANDLE WITH "KEEL"	4
1045	EMOD	PMLOC	A SA Q <0.5MM	BOWL	1	1	WHITE SLIPPED INT;PLAIN GL	23
1047	EMOD	SWSG			1	1		0.5
1050	CBM	MTIL	FAB D	FLAT	5	5		74
1053	CBM	MTIL	FAB B	FLAT	1	1	FINGER IMPRESSIONS ON TOP	51
1053	CBM	MTIL	FAB D	FLAT	4	4		85
1058	CBM	MTIL	FAB B	FLAT	1	1	FINGER IMPRESSIONS ON TOP	142
1058	CBM	MTIL	FAB D	FLAT	6	6	FINGER IMPRESSIONS ON TOP	538
1058	MPOT	MEDLOC	RED CLAY PELLETS;MICACEOUS GROUNDMASS;S RQ AND SST	BOT	2	1		16
1058	MPOT	MEDLOC	RED CLAY PELLETS;MICACEOUS GROUNDMASS;S RQ AND SST;OFF-WHITE BODY	JAR	1	1	UNGLAZED	3
1058	STONE	STONE	LIGHT GREY MICACEOUS SST	FLAT	1	1		9
1060	CBM	MTIL	FAB C	PANT	1	1		28
1060	CBM	MTIL	FAB C	FLAT	1	1	FINGER GROOVES ON TOP	127
1060	CBM	MTIL	FAB D	FLAT	9	9	FINGER GROOVES ON TOP	1181
1060	MPOT	MEDLOC	RED CLAY PELLETS;MICACEOUS GROUNDMASS;S RQ	OBJECT	5	1	UNGLAZED;THROWN TO A	66

Context	class	cname	subfabric	Form	Nosh	NoV	Description	Weight
			AND SST				POINT;?MONEYBOX OR ?FINIAL	
1060	MPOT	MEDLOC	RED CLAY PELLETS;MICACEOUS GROUNDMASS;S RQ (INC MATT GRAINS) AND SST;OFF-WHITE BODY	JAR	1	1	UNGLAZED	23
1060	MPOT	MEDLOC	RED CLAY PELLETS;MICACEOUS GROUNDMASS;S RQ AND SST;OFF-WHITE BODY	JAR	1	1	UNGLAZED	10
1060	MPOT	MEDLOC	SSTMG SAND;OFF-WHITE BODY	JAR	1	1	UNGLAZED	13
1061	CBM	MTIL	FAB D	FLAT	4	4		28
1061	CBM	MTIL	FAB D	BRICK	1	1		67
1061	MPOT	MEDLOC	RED CLAY PELLETS;MICACEOUS GROUNDMASS;S RQ (INC MATT GRAINS) AND SST;OFF-WHITE BODY	JAR	1	1	EXT GLAZE	23
1066	MPOT	MEDLOC	RED CLAY PELLETS;MICACEOUS GROUNDMASS;S RQ AND SST;OFF-WHITE BODY	JAR	1	1		1
1066	MPOT	ST/MART?		?	1	1	MIGHT BE SHERD OF FLASK? OR STAMFORD WARE?	0.5
1079	CBM	MTIL	FAB D		1	1		6
1081	CBM	MTIL			2	2		5
1083	CBM	MTIL	FAB D	FLAT	1	1		10
1085	CBM	MTIL	FAB D	FLAT?	1	1		11
1085	CBM	MTIL	FAB D		1	1		0.5
1086	CBM	MTIL	FAB D	FLAT	18	18	MAINLY SCRAPS	182
1924	EMOD	SWSG		JAR	1	1	MOULDED REEDING CF LATER MARMALADE JARS	1
2000	FCLAY	FCLAY	RED CLAY PELLETS;MICACEOUS GROUNDMASS		1	1		6
2000	MPOT	HUM		JUG	1	1	VERTICAL APPLIED THUMBED STRIP OVER HORIZ GROOVE	11

Context	class	cname	subfabric	Form	Nosh	NoV	Description	Weight
2000	MPOT	MEDLOC	A R AND SA Q SAND <0.5MM	JUG	1	1	PLAIN STRAP;PLAIN GL	81
2000	EMOD	PMLOC	UNTEMPERED	JAR	1	1	UNGLAZED	17
2002	CBM	MTIL	FAB D	BRICK	1	1	1	76
2010	CBM	MTIL	FAB D	BRICK	1	1	1	17
2010	MPOT	MEDLOC	A SST SAND;MICACEOUS GROUNDMASS	JAR	1	1	UNGLAZED	5
2014	CBM	MTIL	FAB D		2	2	2	3
2015	IRON	IRON		WASTE	1	1	BLACK VESICULAR SLAG	21
2016	EMOD	TPW		PLATE	2	2	2	39
2016	EMOD	TPW		PLATE	1	1	WILLOW PATTERN	19
2016	EMOD	WHITE		SINK?	1	1	SLIGHT CURVATURE; TOO LITTLE FOR EITHER A DRAIN OR TOILET	268
2016	EMOD	WHITE		BOWL	2	2	2	116
2019	MPOT	MEDLOC	RED CLAY PELLETS;MICACEOUS GROUNDMASS;S RQ AND SST	JAR	1	1	UNGLAZED	13
3006	MPOT	MEDLOC		JAR	1	1	1	7
3006	MPOT	MEDLOC	RED CLAY PELLETS;MICACEOUS GROUNDMASS;S RQ AND SST	JAR	1	1	UNGLAZED;THUMBED DECORATION AT GIRTH	22
4000	CBM	MTIL	FAB D	FLAT	3	3	FINGER GROOVES ON TOP	238