

## **Assessment of the pottery from Hall Garth Farm, Birkin (BHG'04)**

### ***Alan Vince***

Forty one sherds of pottery were recovered from archaeological evaluation trenches excavated by *Field Archaeology Specialists* at Hall Farm Garth, Birkin, near Selby in North Yorkshire (site code BHG'04). The pottery ranges in date from the late 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries through to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There was not, however, any pottery which could be reliably dated to the late 17<sup>th</sup> to mid 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, contemporary with the late 17<sup>th</sup>-century hall.

### **Description**

#### **Medieval pottery**

Five sherds of medieval pottery were recovered. Of these, four were sherds of York Gritty ware, a wheelthrown whiteware with a coarse temper consisting mainly of fragments of sandstone with some ironstone. This ware dates to the late 11<sup>th</sup> through to the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Recent work on material from the A1 near Wetherby suggests that the ware may continue in use outside of York into at least the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Since these sherds were associated with a sherd of late medieval Humberware (HUM) they probably date to the later part of their date range.

#### **Early Post-medieval pottery**

Twelve sherds of Humberware with a brown or purple external glaze were found. This glaze is produced by the reaction of a lead glaze with an iron-rich slip and appears in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Although several of these sherds have the silty fabric typical of Humberwares from West Cowick and Holme-upon-Spalding Moor a number of sherds had a rounded quartz sand with an inclusionless matrix. This distinctive fabric may indicate the existence of a local Humberware industry, utilising outcrops of Mercian Mudstone and Triassic sands. One of these sherds was heavily overfired and had vitrified. This may have taken place in a fierce domestic fire, but it is also potential evidence for pottery production.

Several Humberware sherds with a standard silty fabric and post-medieval forms were found. These included a chamber pot with a wide, sharply-everted rim. They are likely to be of later 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century date. There is no evidence that the late medieval Humberware production centres continued into this period and again a separate source is likely.

#### **Early Modern**

Most of the pottery could be dated to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, although a few sherds might be of late 18<sup>th</sup> century date. However, the absence of Creamware or mid-late 18<sup>th</sup>-century finewares

(white salt-glazed stoneware or tin-glazed wares) either indicates the poverty of the inhabitants of the cottages or that all the associated material is 19<sup>th</sup> rather than 18<sup>th</sup> century in date.

## Discussion

### Trench 1

Context 1013 produced five sherds of pottery, the latest of which was late medieval in date (i.e. late 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century).

Three contexts (1006, 1015 and 1017) all produced early modern pottery, in two cases including definite 19<sup>th</sup>-century wares and in one a fragment of transfer-printed ware cup of possible late 18<sup>th</sup> century date (1015), although even this sherd quite possibly dates to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### Trench 2

A single sherd of 16<sup>th</sup>-century Humberware was found in context 1054.

### Trench 3

Context 1032 produced a mixed assemblage of three sherds, two of which are Humberware and the third a sherd of a transfer-printed ware cup.

### Trench 4

Context 1043 produced two sherds of pottery, one abraded York Gritty ware jar sherd and one sherd of probably 16<sup>th</sup>-century Humberware.

Context 1037 produced 5 sherds of pottery, of which one small scrap is of 19<sup>th</sup>-century date and the remainder are larger fresh Humberwares sherds, probably of late 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup>-century date. A single clay tobacco pipe bowl, datable to c.1660-80, was found in the same layer.

### Trench 5

Context 1048 produced a single sherd of Humberware, of late medieval or 16<sup>th</sup>-century date.

Context 1047 produced two sherds of Humberware, of 16<sup>th</sup>-century date.

Context 1045 produced seven sherds of pottery of which the latest is of 19<sup>th</sup>-century date whilst the remainder are lead-glazed earthenwares, some with black glaze, and some with white slip, which might be of this date but could be earlier.

## Assessment

The pottery indicates activity on the site in the medieval period, probably no later than the 14<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps much earlier. Following this, there is some doubt as to whether any of the Humberware sherds are late medieval rather than 16<sup>th</sup> century in date, and there is certainly activity on the site in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The clay pipe and Humberware from context 1037 are closest in date to the ornamental gate posts and, assuming that the 19<sup>th</sup>-century sherd in this deposit is intrusive, this is the only assemblage which might belong to the late 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> century but is more likely to be of mid 17<sup>th</sup> century date. Then follows a period in which no pottery was deposited on the site, lasting until either the late 18<sup>th</sup> or more likely the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Most of the pottery is of types which are well-known and do not require further study. However, the sand-tempered Humberwares are unusual and may be evidence for pottery production on or close to the site in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This could be investigated further by thin-section and chemical analysis. To produce, study and report on a single thin section and a group of six chemical analyses would cost £157.50 plus VAT = £185.00.

Appendix

sitecode	trench	context	cname	subfabric	Form	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Description	Use	Condition
bhg'04	3	C1032	HUM		JAR	2	1	112	CUGL EXT;PLAIN GL INT;THUMBED STRIP AROUND NECK?		
bhg'04	3	C1032	TPW		CUP	1	1	4			
bhg'04	5	C1048	HUM	FINE MATRIX WITH ROUNDED QUARTZ SAND	JUG	1	1	11	EXT PLAIN GL;APPLIED STRIP WITH RING STAMPS;MED? PMED?		
bhg'04	4	C1043	YG	SOME SSTMG >2.0MM;SOME RQ;SOME RFE	JAR	1	1	6			ABR
bhg'04	4	C1043	HUM	FINE MATRIX WITH ROUNDED QUARTZ SAND	JUG	1	1	7	PURPLE SLIP EXT		
bhg'04	4	C1037	HUM	SILTY	JAR	1	1	172	INT PLAIN GL		
bhg'04	4	C1037	HUM	SILTY	CHP	1	1	99	INT AND EXT GL;WIDE FLANGED RIM;HORIZ GROOVES ON SHOULDER		
bhg'04	4	C1037	HUM	SILTY	BOWL	1	1	22	INT CUGL		
bhg'04	4	C1037	PIPECLAY		PIPE	1	1	12	HEELED BOWL C.1660-80		
bhg'04	4	C1037	HUM	SILTY	JUG/JAR	1	1	9			
bhg'04	4	C1037	WHITE		-	1	1	3	CYLINDRICAL JAR OR TANK?		
bhg'04	1	C1017	PEAR		PLATE	2	1	32			

sitecode	trench	context	cname	subfabric	Form	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Description	Use	Condition
bhg'04	1	C1017	STCO		PLATE	1	1	85	TRAILED SLIP BAND L18?		
bhg'04	1	C1017	TPW		CUP	2	1	5	WILLOW PATTERN		
bhg'04	1	C1017	BLUE		JAR	2	1	26	MOULDED		
bhg'04	1	C1017	PIPECLAY		PIPE	1	1	4	17TH/18TH BORE DIAM		
bhg'04	1	C1006	NCBW		CHP	3	1	135	INDUSTRIAL SLIPWARE;MARBLED SLIP LOOPS BETWEEN HORIZ DKBR SLIP BANDS		
bhg'04	1	C1013	HUM		JAR	1	1	54			
bhg'04	1	C1013	YG		JUG	1	1	40	NARROW STRAP		
bhg'04	1	C1013	YG		JAR	3	3	34			
bhg'04	1	C1015	BL		BOWL	1	1	303	INT BL GL		
bhg'04	1	C1015	LHUM		DISH	1	1	40	INT PLAIN GL;SMALL FLANGE		
bhg'04	1	C1015	TPW		PLATE	1	1	18			
bhg'04	5	C1045	NCBW		TANK	1	1	6	WHITE SLIP BANDS		
bhg'04	5	C1045	PIPECLAY		PIPE	1	1	1	17TH/18TH BORE DIAM		
bhg'04	5	C1045	SLIP	SILTY	BOWL	1	1	30	WHITE SLIP INT;BROWN MOTTLED GL		
bhg'04	5	C1045	BL	RED WITH RQ AND SST	BOWL	2	1	63	INT BL GL		
bhg'04	5	C1045	BL	CM WHITE CLAY	POSS	1	1	23			

sitecode	trench	context	cname	subfabric	Form	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Description	Use	Condition
bhg'04	5	C1045	HUM?	A RQ	-	1	1	0	HOLLOW WARE		OVERFIRED
bhg'04	2	C1054	HUM	FINE MATRIX WITH ROUNDED QUARTZ SAND	JUG	1	1	137	EXT BROWN GL;R/H JOIN		ABR
bhg'04	5	C1047	HUM	FINE MATRIX WITH ROUNDED QUARTZ SAND	JAR/JAR	1	1	46	THUMB IMPRESSIONS AT B/H JOIN		
bhg'04	5	C1047	HUM	FINE MATRIX WITH ROUNDED QUARTZ SAND	JAR/JAR	1	1	31	PLAIN GLAZE DRIBBLES WITH BROWN EDGES TO GLAZE (OVER BROWN SLIP?)		