

## Assessment of the pottery from Countess Close Evaluation Trenches, Alkborough (CCA2003)

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Ninety-nine sherds of pottery (including a fragment of ceramic building material) were submitted for identification and assessment. They were identified by Barbara Precious (Roman) and Alan Vince and Jane Young (Anglo-Saxon, Medieval and later). The codes used are those adopted by Scunthorpe Museum (Table 1).

**Table 1**

cname	class	full name	period	earliest date	latest date
BERTH	PMPOT	Black glazed earthenware	pmed	1550	1800
BEVO	MPOT	Beverley Orange ware	emed	1150	1350
BEVO1	MPOT	Beverley Orange ware	emed	1140	1230
BEVO2	MPOT	Beverley Orange ware	emed	1170	1350
BL	PMPOT	Black-glazed wares	pmed	1500	1750
CMW	MPOT	Coal Measures whiteware	med	1250	1550
COAR	RPOT	Reduced misc Roman coarsewares	rom	40	400
DWSH	RPOT	Dales Shelly ware	rom	250	400
ECHAF	ESAX	Early to mid Anglo-Saxon chaff-tempered ware	emsax	450	800
GREY	RPOT	Romano-British greywares	rom	40	400
HUM	MPOT	Humberware	lmed	1250	1500
LEMS	MPOT	Lincoln Early Medieval Shelly ware	emed	1150	1250
LFS	MPOT	Lincoln Fine Shelled ware	lsax-emed	950	1200
LKT	MPOT	Lincoln kiln-type shelly ware	lsax	850	1000
LPMLOC	PMPOT	Late Post-medieval wares (local to site)	lpmed	1750	1950
NAT	RPOT	'Native' Wares	ROM	40	150
NLST	MPOT	North Lincolnshire shelly	emed	1150	1250
OX	RPOT	Oxidized ware	rom	40	400
OXF	RPOT	Fine Oxidized ware	rom	40	400
PEARL	PMPOT	Pearlware	emod	1770	1900
PMTIL	CBM	Post-medieval ceramic building material	pmed	1550	1900
SAMCG	RPOT	Central Gaulish Samian Ware	rom	100	200
ZDATE	general comment	General context date	na	0	0

ZZZ	general comment	General context comments	na	0	0
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## Description

The collection consisted of small groups of Romano-British, Early Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Scandinavian, medieval and later pottery, together with a fragment of ceramic building material. The Romano-British, Early Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Scandinavian pottery was abraded and consisted of small to medium-sized sherds whereas the medieval pottery was fresh in appearance and included several sherds which appear to have come from the same vessels. The 16<sup>th</sup>-century pottery and later pottery was also fresh but in general consisted of small to medium sherds.

### Roman pottery

Eighteen sherds of Romano-British pottery were recovered, weighing in total 141 gm (mean weight 7.8gm). The sherds are abraded and include one sherd of Samian ware dating to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and three sherds of Dales-type shelly ware dating to the later 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### Early to mid Anglo-Saxon pottery

Two sherds of Early Anglo-Saxon pottery were recovered, weighing 5gm in total (mean weight 2.5gm). The fabrics are ESGS, already known from this site from the fieldwalking collection, and ECHAF. The latter sherd might conceivably be a fragment of ceramic building material since organic-tempered clay was used as daub and for loomweights. It is too small for positive identification.

### Anglo-Scandinavian to medieval pottery

Two sherds of Lincoln Kiln-type shelly ware (LKT) were recovered from context 2000. These sherds cannot be closely dated but are probably earlier than c.1000AD. They therefore extend the date-range of the Anglo-Scandinavian activity known on the site back to the late 10<sup>th</sup> century at the latest.

A collection of 50 later 12<sup>th</sup> and early 13<sup>th</sup>-century sherds were recovered. They weigh 643gm in total (mean weight 12.86gm). These include Beverley 1 and 2 ware jugs and jars together with various shell-tempered wares (LFS, LEMS, NLST) which can be dated through their methods of manufacture and typology to the later 12<sup>th</sup> and early 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. These wares were probably all tempered with shelly Jurassic limestones and are similar in fabric to vessels made in Lincoln and Potterhanworth.

Two sherds of later medieval pottery were recovered, from context 2000. They weigh 81gm in total (mean weight 40.5gm). They consist of a bunghole from a Rawmarsh ware cistern (CMW) and a Humberware vessel. Both types continued in production into the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

## **Post-medieval and later pottery**

Seven fragments of post-medieval and early modern pottery were recovered, from contexts 1000, 1010 and 2000. They weigh 88gm in total (mean weight 12.5gm). As a group they probably date to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## **Ceramic building material**

A single small fragment of tile was recovered from context 2005.

## **Discussion**

The pottery comes from two trenches, Trench 1 and Trench 2, both of which cut across the moat of the Countess Close moat.

### **Trench 1**

#### **Phase 1 ?medieval**

The primary fill of ditch 1013 (1024) produced a single sherd of Beverley glazed ware jug. It was not possible to date the sherd closely, but it must be later than c.1140.

The tertiary fill of the ditch (1020) produced another sherd from the same just together with a sherd of Lincoln Fine Shelled ware (LFS). This ware was first produced in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century but continued in use to the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

A silty clay fill which overlay these ditch fills (1006/1014) produced a small group of pottery which includes some residual Roman sherds (the latest of which is mid 3<sup>rd</sup> century or later) and a residual sherd of early to mid Anglo-Saxon pottery (ECHAF) together with sherds of medieval pottery which, as a group, probably date to the early to mid 13<sup>th</sup> century. It includes two decorated sherds of Beverley 2 ware, one of which has roller-stamped decoration.

#### **Phase 2 ?late medieval/post-medieval**

A layer of silty clay (1023) produced a residual sherd of Romano-British pottery, dating to the late 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Dumped deposits, 1017 and 1022 produced small assemblages of medieval pottery. As a group, these sherds appear to be either similar in date to those from phase 1 or even slightly earlier. This suggests that they have been re-deposited. Therefore, they are irrelevant to the date of the phase.

#### **Phase 3 post-medieval/modern**

The fill of tree-bole 1025 produced a single sherd of pottery, a Beverley 1 ware jug sherd. This is clearly residual from Phase 1.

The buried 1960s topsoil produced residual sherds of Romano-British and medieval pottery and a sherd of Blackware (BL) and Pearlware (PEAR) of 19<sup>th</sup> century date.

### **Trench 2**

The sandy subsoil (2003/2027) produced a small collection of Romano-British pottery, dating to the mid 3<sup>rd</sup> to early 4<sup>th</sup> century. The sherds are leached and abraded, which is consistent with their having been in the subsoil since the Roman period.

### **Phases 1 and 2 ?medieval/late medieval**

The clay fill of the Countess Close moat (2028) produced a single, residual sherd of Romano-British pottery and a single sherd of early Anglo-Saxon pottery.

### **Phase 3 post-medieval/modern**

Buried topsoil (2005) produced a small fragment of post-medieval ceramic building material and single sherds of Roman and medieval pottery.

### **Assessment**

The scatter of Romano-British pottery suggests activity in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century on or close to the evaluation trenches. The two sherds of early Anglo-Saxon pottery are of some interest since only one sherd of this date was found in fieldwalking on the site. This suggests that pottery of this period does not survive in the ploughsoil but may have originally been present. There are also two sherds of late 9<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup>-century date which confirm the evidence from the fieldwalking for pre-conquest activity in the area. However, it seems quite clear that the moat itself was constructed in the later 12<sup>th</sup> or early 13<sup>th</sup> century since most of the pottery found was current during this period. There are sherds in the collection which ought to date to the late 12<sup>th</sup> rather than the early 13<sup>th</sup> century and this is probably the construction date whilst there is very little pottery which need date to the late 13<sup>th</sup> century or later. Whether this implies that the moat was not occupied after the mid 13<sup>th</sup> century or just that no finds entered the moat is unclear. The later finds include a single 16<sup>th</sup>-century sherd and a small number which are probably of 19<sup>th</sup>-century date.

None of the sherds is of intrinsic interest and the late 12<sup>th</sup>/early 13<sup>th</sup>-century collection probably contains material associated with both the construction and the use of the moat and so cannot be treated as a single-period assemblage. The material should, nevertheless, be retained for potential future study, with the exception of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century sherds which could be discarded.