

Assessment of the pottery from Wilberfoss, East Yorkshire (WMS'04)

A small collection of pottery from Wilberfoss, East Yorkshire, from archaeological fieldwork carried out by Field Archaeology Specialists Ltd, was submitted for identification and assessment.

Description

Twenty four fragments were submitted, of which one is an abraded fragment of ceramic building material and the remainder are potsherds. All the finds came from a single feature, F5.

Pottery of three types was identified (Table 1), probably representing just three vessels. The fabric of the GRE and BL vessels is very similar and contains no inclusions larger than 0.1mm across but abundant quartz silt, with sparse muscovite laths. This fabric is very similar to that used in the Humberware industries at West Cowick and Holme-upon-Spalding Moor. However, the fact that the vessels are oxidized and employ black glaze indicates that they should not themselves be classed as Humberware.

Table 1

Code	Name	Date Range	Comments
GRE	Glazed Red Earthenware	1550-1900	Plain lead glazed earthenware, usually fired in oxidizing conditions.
BL	Blackware	1550-1900	Earthenware with a deliberate black glaze. Several methods were probably used to obtain this brown colour, including an under-glaze slip and the addition of iron and/or manganese to the lead glaze
ENGS	English Stoneware	1690-1900	A code for miscellaneous stonewares of unknown but probably English origin.

Three vessel forms were present, the GRE vessel is a large storage jar with a thick walled shoulder and base but thinner walls at the girth. The vessel has a wide cordon at the shoulder, decorated with individual thumb impressions. The BL sherd comes from a thin-walled globular bodied vessel, probably a pipkin or a jar. The ENGS sherd comes from the

flat base of a vessel in which the base is slightly concave. A colourless glaze has pooled on the outside of the base. This might be a salt glaze or a feldspathic glaze.

Discussion

All the sherds come from a single feature, F5. If we assume that they form a contemporary group then the deposition date would come from the ENGS vessel. If the glaze on this sherd is indeed feldspathic then it is likely to have been made in the mid 19th-century or later, otherwise a date in the very late 17th or 18th centuries is possible. A mid 19th-century date for the earthenware vessels is possible although a late 17th or 18th-century date is perhaps more likely. The earthenware vessels were presumably made somewhere to the south of Wilberfoss, to judge by the similarity in their fabric to Humberwares from West Cowick and Holme-upon-Spalding Moor. The source of the ENGS vessel is unknown. The fabric could well be made from Coal Measures white-firing clay and is certainly not local.

Assessment

The pottery from Wilberfoss is of post-medieval or early modern date, perhaps as late as the mid 19th century but more likely of 18th century date. The lack of factory-made whitewares makes a close dating of the assemblage difficult.

Appendix 1. Catalogue of recorded pottery

Context	SF No	Description	Cname	Form	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Subfabric
1007	1		GRE	SJ	21	1	641	SILTY FABRIC
1007	1	INT BLACK GL	BL	PIP	1	1	7	SILTY FABRIC
1007	1		FCLAY		1	1	10	SANDY FABRIC
1007	1	THICK SALT? GLAZE ON BASE (COULD BE FELDSPATHIC GLAZE)	ENGS	JAR	1	1	7	FINE BROWN BODY