

Assessment of the pottery from the former Arriva Bus Depot, Northgate, Pontefract (PNG'04). Excavation stage

Alan Vince and Kate Steane

An archaeological evaluation on the site of the former Arriva Bus Depot in Northgate, Pontefract, carried out by Field Archaeology Specialists Ltd in 2004 produced evidence for a large ditch, interpreted as a Civil War siege work, into whose filling had been inserted two brick kilns. After a short period of use, these kilns were backfilled and a culvert inserted. Subsequently, the site was levelled and malt kilns built on the site, in the 19th century.

An excavation was later carried out, prior to the construction of a new access into the site (intervention 14). This examined further the two brick clamps. In several cases, this intervention recorded the same deposits as had been excavated in the evaluation and where this is the case the evaluation finds are re-assessed here. In addition, a watching brief was carried out on all below-ground construction works (intervention 15).

The pottery from interventions 14 and 15 was submitted for identification and assessment and the results have been compared with those of the initial evaluation. They indicate that there is a considerable quantity of medieval pottery from the site, all of which is probably from later deposits. There is little if anything which can be related to the Civil War whilst the operation of the brick kilns took place in the later 17th century (probably later than c.1660 but earlier than c.1680). Little pottery dating later than c.1680 and earlier than the later 18th century was present and the early modern sequence seems to start at some point in the late 18th or early 19th century, suggesting that the malt kilns were constructed c.1780-1820. Of note is a sherd of biscuit-fired Creamware, perhaps from the Ferrybridge pottery at which Ralph Wedgwood worked in the late 18th century.

Description

Clay Tobacco Pipes

Thirteen fragments of clay tobacco pipe were recovered from Intervention 14. Two were stratified in the backfill of the Civil War siegework (context 1132). They are undecorated stem fragments with bore diameters consistent with an early to mid 17th-century date. One fragment was stratified in the fill of the brick clamp, context 1094. This too has a bore diameter consistent with an early to mid 17th-century date. The remaining 10 fragments were recovered from the final, late 18th to early 19th-century backfill of the siegework. Seven of these are of early to mid 17th-century type but three have the narrow bore diameters which characterise late 18th-century and later pipes. Two of these are plain stem fragments but one has an impressed stem stamp, part of which reads "LLARY".

Pottery

A total of 260 sherds of pottery were recovered from Interventions 14 and 15, including 38 recovered in the evaluation. The sherds represent no more than 165 vessels and weigh in total 4.240 Kg. Most of the pottery was relatively fresh in condition but 14 sherds were abraded, all of them of medieval date. A single fragment of biscuit fired pottery (i.e. probably waste, but perhaps a second) was recovered.

Medieval (Table 1)

Seventy-four sherds of medieval pottery were recovered, all from residual contexts (Table 1). The pottery ranged in date from the late 11th to mid 13th centuries (Yorkshire Gritty ware, YG) to the later 14th or 15th centuries (e.g. Humberware, HUM). Yorkshire Gritty sherds were the most common ware present, followed by unidentified but probably local glazed sand-tempered wares (MEDLOC) and sherds of coarse sand/gravel-tempered glazed whiteware, Northern Gritty ware (NGRITTY). These latter wares are probably of later 12th to 14th century date. Two sherds of a red-firing unglazed gritty ware, probably of later 11th to 12th-century date were present (HILLAM). Finally, sherds of three non-local vessels were present, all jugs. They consist of one sherd of Beverley glazed ware (BEVO2) and two sherds of Brandsby-type ware.

All but five of the sherds could be assigned to a form. Most, 42 sherds, were from jars whilst 27 were from jugs.

Post-medieval (Table 2)

Eighty-three sherds of post-medieval pottery were recovered from Intervention 14. They come from no more than forty-seven vessels and weigh in total 2.296 Kg.

The most common ware present was Midlands Yellow ware (MY), produced from untempered Coal Measures whiteware clay with a glossy plain lead glaze, which often fits the surface of the vessels badly, leading to a loss of glaze. Such vessels were produced at a number of centres from the later 16th to the mid 17th centuries (including Wrenthorpe) and in Staffordshire they are ancestral to the slipware industry. A number of sherds came from one or more crude vessels, classed here as Midlands Yellow ware, but containing abundant coarse fragments of coal and organic shale. The vessel(s) have an internal yellow glaze, and had an almost cylindrical profile. The outer surface of the vessel is coated with soot.

The next most common ware is blackglazed ware (BL). These blackwares were also produced at numerous centres in the midlands and northern England. Thin-walled redware vessels with a black glaze, Cistercian ware (CSTN) were also present. This ware may have been produced first in the 15th century but is mainly present in the 16th century, developing into blackwares in the 17th century. Seven sherds of Staffordshire redware were found.

These vessels were made from Coal Measures redware clays and either have a black glaze or a plain lead glaze (in which case they usually have white slip coating and sometimes slip-trailed decoration (noted on two of the Pontefract sherds). Five sherds of brownware (brown-glazed earthenware) were found (BERTH). This ware was also made at numerous centres.

Single examples of glazed red earthenware (GRE), Martincamp stoneware (MART), Midlands Purple ware (MP) and Staffordshire slipware (STSL) were present.

The post-medieval wares range in date from the 16th to the late 17th century, the latest type present being the Staffordshire slipware, examples of which are known with dates ranging from the late 1670s onwards.

Early Modern (Table 3)

Ninety-four sherds of early modern pottery were recovered (Table 3). They represent no more than forty-four vessels and weigh in total 779 gm. About half of the pottery consists of Creamware (CREA). Creamware was first produced in the 1760s by Wedgwood and by 1765 was in full production and exported worldwide from the Potteries. In addition, it was produced elsewhere, including at Ferrybridge, the source of at least one of the sherds from the Northgate evaluation. The Ferrybridge factory was in operation in the 1790s.

Nottingham stoneware is the next most common ware present (10 sherds from 6 vessels) followed by Transfer printed ware (TPW, 9 sherds, 5 vessels), English Stoneware (5 sherds, 2 vessels) and Pearlware (11 sherds, 2 vessels). Other types are represented by single vessels, sometimes represented by several sherds.

The majority of the Northgate early modern sherds are of types current in the later 18th century and includes some types which were not produced after the mid 18th century (but which are often found in later 18th-century assemblages, presumably because they were highly prized by their owners. This is the case with English white saltglazed stoneware (SWSG) for example.

There are in addition, however, some sherds for which a post-1800 date are likely. These include a sherd of an English stoneware bottle with a feldspathic glaze, of a type which came into use in the mid 19th century. However, with this exception, all the remaining types could well have been current in the late 18th century.

Assessment

Intervention 14

The backfill of F38, the Civil War siegework, produced a collection of 45 sherds of pottery. Most of these are of medieval date and include few cases of joining sherds. The mean size of the sherds is 21gm, which is not particularly small. Therefore, the sherds have probably

been redeposited from occupation or rubbish deposits rather than soil horizons or ploughsoil. The latest sherds present are two joining sherds of Midlands Yellow bowl.

Sixty-four sherds were associated with the brick clamps. Nine came from a makeup layer below the clamp. Twenty-six of these were recovered from the clay lining of the clamp base. Fourteen were found in a layer of ash associated with F25. Fifteen came from the filling of the clamp.

The makeup layer produced a sherd of Midlands Yellow jar together with residual medieval and 16th-century pottery. The clamp base produced sherds of brown-glazed earthenware, Staffordshire redware bowl, and Midlands Yellow ware. Similar sherds were present in the ash spread (Midlands Yellow ware, Staffordshire Redware, Midlands Purple ware) whilst the fill of the clamp produced more sherds of Midlands Yellow ware.

Some of these Midlands Yellow ware sherds are large and include joining sherds. They include the vessel(s) with coal/shale inclusions. It is clear that this vessel at least was discarded during the life of the kilns. The remaining sherds are consistent with a mid/late 17th-century date.

The backfill of the construction cut of the stone-built culvert, context 1113, a layer of ashy soil overlying one of the clamps, 1097, and the fills of a scoop caused by subsidence in the siegework ditch, contexts 1115, 1122, and 1128, all produced assemblages containing late 18th century or later pottery. Of these, the scoop fills are possibly the latest since they contain transfer printed ware sherds. These contexts also contain numerous joining sherds, suggesting that the pottery within them includes contemporary refuse.

Intervention 15

Only two contexts observed in the watching brief produced pottery: a mid 19th-century or later stoneware sherd from context 1159 and a medieval jug sherd from context 1162.

Recommendations

Retention

The material mainly comes from stratified assemblages and should be retained for future study.

Illustration

No vessels were worthy of illustration for their intrinsic interest. Neither are there any large, contemporary assemblages of pottery associated with either the siegeworks or the brick clamps. A probably late 18th/early 19th-century assemblage was recovered from the final

filling of the siegeworks and this includes 21 illustratable rim sherds. However, it is not considered that this group is of sufficient interest to make illustration worthwhile.

Analysis

The medieval pottery record from the site could be correlated with the West Yorkshire type series but given the residual nature of the finds it is not considered that this work is worth undertaking.

Similarly, further work could be undertaken on the source of the mid and late 17th-century pottery associated with the siegework and brick clamps but the assemblages of contemporary pottery are very small.

As an example of locally-produced Creamware, the biscuit-fired bowl sherd from context 1097 is of interest and could be analysed to reveal its chemical composition, since it may prove possible to distinguish Ferrybridge from other Creamware if the factories used different raw materials. At present, however, research into these finewares has concentrated on porcelains and bone china and it might not be possible to find comparanda. Nevertheless, the analysis of this sherd would be a useful start.

Publication

The pottery collection itself does not warrant publication except in conjunction with any further work on the brick clamps, in which case a short note of on the mid to late 17th-century pottery should be prepared. This should involve the re-examination of the mid/late 17th-century pottery from both the evaluation and excavation phases and the production of a single report on the pottery.

Table 1

cname	Weight (gm)	NoSh	NoV
BEVO2	2	1	1
BRAN?	5	2	1
CMW	594	14	3
HILLAM	29	2	2
HUM	132	9	9
MEDLOC	216	27	21
NGRITTY	455	14	14
PIPECLAY	51	15	15
YG	280	28	26
Grand Total	1764	112	92

Table 2

cname	Wt (gm)	NoSh	NoV
BERTH	793	17	5
BL	208	13	10
CSTN	149	15	10
GRE	2	1	1
MART	11	1	1
MP	17	1	1
MY	928	27	11
STCO	23	1	1
STRE	164	7	7
STSL	1	1	1
Grand Total	2296	84	48

Table 3

cname	Wt (gm)	NoSh	NoV
CREA	310	45	24
NOTS	152	10	6
TPW	48	9	5
ENGS	56	5	2
PEARL	82	11	2
STCO	23	1	1
STSL	1	1	1
ENPO	30	3	1
SUND	55	1	1
SWSG	22	8	1
Grand Total	779	94	44

Table 4. Catalogue of pottery and clay tobacco pipes

context	cname	subfabric	Form	NoSh	NoV	Wt (gm)	Description	Part	Use	Condition
1092	HUM		JAR	1	1	0		BS	SOOTED EXT	
1094	MY		BOWL	1	1	24		R		
1094	MY	COAL	BOWL	8	1	207	THICK WALLED SHL 1095	BS	SOOTED EXT	
1094	PIPECLAY		PIPE	1	1	3	17TH CENTURY BORE	STEM		
1095	MY	COAL	JAR	5	1	379	THICK WALLED SHL 1094	BS	SOOTED EXT	
1095	YG		JAR	1	1	3		BS		
1096	MEDLOC	RED	JUG	4	4	15		BS		ABR
1096	MP		JUG	1	1	17		H		
1096	MY		BOWL	1	1	48		R		
1096	NGRITTY		JUG	1	1	50	VERT GROOVES	BS		
1096	STRE		BOWL	1	1	11		BS		
1096	YG		JAR	2	2	18		R		
1097	BL		JAR	1	1	6		BS		
1097	CREA		BOWL	1	1	8		R		BISCUIT WASTE
1097	CSTN		CUP	4	1	15		BS		
1113	BL		BOWL	1	1	15		BS		
1113	BL		JAR	1	1	13		BS		
1113	CREA		CUP	1	1	13		B		
1113	CREA		PLATE	1	1	3		BS		
1113	CSTN		CUP	1	1	26		B		
1113	GRE		PIP	1	1	2		BS	SOOTED EXT	
1113	PEARL		CUP	1	1	1		BS		
1113	STRE		BOWL	1	1	13		BS		
1113	STSL		BOWL	1	1	1		BS		
1113	YG		JAR	1	1	5		BS		
1115	BERTH		BOWL	1	1	9		BS		
1115	BERTH		PANC	13	1	738		R;BS		
1115	BL		JAR	1	1	32		B		
1115	BL		JAR	3	1	38		R;BS		
1115	BL		BOWL	4	3	42		BS		
1115	CREA		BOWL	1	1	9		B		
1115	CREA		PLATE	3	1	36	PLAIN RIM	R;BS		
1115	CREA		PLATE	4	1	42	WAVY RIM	R;B		
1115	CREA		PLATE	4	1	27		B;BS		
1115	CREA		PLATE	14	13	70		R;BS		
1115	CSTN		CUP	4	2	76		B;H;BS		
1115	ENPO		TPOT LID	3	1	30	TPW DESIGN	R;BS		
1115	MEDLOC	WHITE	JAR	1	1	3		BS		

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context	cname	subfabric	Form	NoSh	NoV	Wt (gm)	Description	Part	Use	Condition
1115	MEDLOC	RED	JUG	2	2	19		R;BS		
1115	MY		JUG	1	1	15		BS		
1115	NGRITTY		JUG	1	1	28		H		ABR
1115	NGRITTY		JUG	1	1	44		H		
1115	NOTS		JUG	1	1	18		H		
1115	NOTS		JAR	1	1	2	INCISED DEC	BS		
1115	NOTS		JAR	2	1	32		R		
1115	NOTS		JAR	4	1	47		BS		
1115	PEARL		BOWL	10	1	81	PLAIN RIM	R;B;BS		
1115	PIPECLAY		PIPE	1	1	0	19TH CENTURY BORE '...LLARY' IMPRINTED ROUND STEM	STEM		
1115	PIPECLAY		PIPE	2	2	3	19TH CENTURY BORE	STEM		
1115	PIPECLAY		PIPE	6	6	20	17TH CENTURY BORE	STEM		
1115	STRE		BOWL	1	1	106		B		
1115	STRE		BOWL	1	1	4	SLIP TRAIL	BS		
1115	SWSG		BOWL	8	1	22		R;B;BS		
1115	TPW		JAR	4	1	18		BS		
1115	WEST		TANK	1	1	70		R		
1115	YG		JAR	1	1	18		R		
1122	BL		JAR	1	1	51		R		
1122	CREA		PLATE	7	1	30		R;BS		
1122	TPW		BOWL	2	1	6		BS		
1128	BERTH		BOWL	1	1	16		BS		
1128	BERTH		JAR	1	1	10		BS		
1128	BL		BOWL	1	1	11		BS		
1128	CREA		PLATE	2	1	31	PLAIN RIM	R;B		
1128	CREA		JAR	3	1	11	INDUST SLIP	R;B;BS		
1128	CREA		JUG	4	1	30		H;BS		
1128	CSTN		CUP	1	1	12		BS		
1128	ENGS		JAR	1	1	22		R		
1128	NGRITTY		JAR	1	1	37		R		
1128	NOTS		JAR	1	1	42		B		
1128	NOTS		JAR	1	1	11		BS		
1128	PIPECLAY		PIPE	1	1	3	17TH CENTURY BORE	STEM		
1128	STCO		BOWL	1	1	23		BS		
1128	STRE		BOWL	1	1	11	SLIP UNDER GLAZE INT; SLIP DEC EXT	BS		
1128	SUND		PANC	1	1	55		R		
1128	TPW		PLATE	1	1	11		BS		
1128	TPW		BOWL	2	2	13		R		
1128	YG		JAR	2	1	4		BS		
1131	MEDLOC		JUG	1	1	11		BS		
1131	NGRITTY		JAR	1	1	96	THICK WALLED	BS	SOOTED EXT	

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context	cname	subfabric	Form	NoSh	NoV	Wt (gm)	Description	Part	Use	Condition
1131	NGRITTY		JAR	1	1	24		BS		
1131	YG		JAR	1	1	6		BS		
1132	MY		BOWL	2	2	18		BS		
1132	NGRITTY		JAR	1	1	15		BS		
1132	PIPECLAY		PIPE	2	2	4	17TH CENTURY BORE	STEM		
1133	BRAN?		JUG	2	1	5		BS		
1133	HUM		JUG	1	1	53		H		
1133	HUM		JUG	1	1	18	CORDON; HORIZ AND WAVY LINES	BS		
1133	HUM		JAR	1	1	6		BS		
1133	MEDLOC	WHITE SANDY	JUG	3	2	64		BS		
1133	MEDLOC	RED	JUG	5	5	24		BS		ABR
1133	MEDLOC	WHITE	JUG/JAR	6	1	46		BS		
1133	NGRITTY		JAR	1	1	61		R	SOOTED EXT	
1133	NGRITTY		JAR	1	1	0		R	SOOTED EXT	
1133	NGRITTY		JAR	1	1	49		B		
1133	NGRITTY		JAR	1	1	4		BS		
1133	NGRITTY		JUG	1	1	11		BS		
1133	YG		JAR	1	1	15		BS	SOOTED INT/EXT	
1133	YG		JAR	5	5	46		BS		
1133	YG		JAR	8	8	88		BS	SOOTED EXT	
1159	ENGS		BOT	4	1	34	BRISTOL GLAZE	R;BS		
1162	NGRITTY		JAR	1	1	14		BS		