

The Pottery from Fishergate House and Blue Bridge Lane, Fishergate, York: Period 6

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Forty-seven features excavated by Field Archaeology Specialists Ltd at Fishergate House and Blue Bridge Lane, Fishergate, York, were assigned by the excavators to Period 6. Of these, three were on the Fishergate House site and forty-four on the Blue Bridge Lane site.

In total, 1247 sherds, representing no more than 1016 vessels and weighing 12.890 Kg were recovered. Of these, 166 were of Roman date, 8 of Anglian date, 29 of Anglo-Scandinavian date, an undeterminable quantity are of late 11th to early 12th century date, 2 of late medieval or post-medieval date and presumed to be intrusive and the remainder range from the later 12th to the 14th century, with the majority being of later 12th to early 13th-century date.

Catalogue

Roman pottery

One hundred and sixty-six sherds of Roman pottery were present in Period 6 feature fills. Most of these are small sherds of later 1st to early 3rd-century types, mainly Eboracum wares.

Anglian pottery

Eight sherds of Anglian pottery were recovered from Period 6 deposits: five sherds of Northern Maxey-type ware; one grey burnished ware and one Ipswich ware.

Residual Anglo-Scandinavian Wares

Thirty sherds of Anglo-Scandinavian pottery were recovered from Period 6 deposits. They consist of fifteen sherds of Torksey ware, seven sherds of York A ware and seven sherds of York D ware.

Residual Late 11th/early 12th-century Wares

A single sherd of a distinctive handmade coarsewares, coded GSS, was present. This ware is thought to be of late 11th to 12th-century date and was traded up and down the east coast from a source in East Anglia or the Wash. Twenty-five sherds of Stamford ware were present. These consist of 18 unglazed jar sherds and 7 glazed jug sherds. The latter are certainly earlier than c.1150 and the former probably also date to this period.

Beverley Ware (BEVO, BEVO1, BEVO2)

Forty-three sherds of Beverley ware were recovered from Period 6 deposits, representing no more than 13 vessels. All but one sherd come from jugs, including an example decorated with wavy combed lines. The remaining sherd comes from a jar. Beverley ware was produced from the mid 12th century into the 14th century at Beverley, although recent thin-section and chemical analysis of samples from York indicates that it is possible that the York vessels come from another source, perhaps in the Vale of York.

Brandsby-type Ware (BRAN)

Twenty-five sherds of Brandsby-type ware were recovered from Period 6 deposits, representing no more than 23 vessels. Brandsby-type ware was produced at various sites in the Hambleton Hills from the later 13th century onwards, probably continuously into the later 15th century when it was replaced by Ryedale ware, which was partially produced at the same centres. The sherds come from jugs (16), jars (8) and a small jug or drinking jug.

Coal Measures Whiteware (CMW)

A single sherd of Coal Measures Whiteware was recovered from a Period 6 deposit. This ware is characterised by the fine-textured, white-firing body and often by the presence of rounded white clay pellets, relict clay. Coal Measures Whiteware is a generic term for the products of several industries and production sites are known in South Yorkshire and Derbyshire, and may also be present in West Yorkshire. The sherd comes from a jug with cordons on the shoulder. Coal Measures Whiteware tends to be of late 13th-century or later date and there is probably a continuous use of this clay into the post-medieval period.

Low Countries Redware (DUTR)

A single sherd of Low Countries Redware was recovered from a Period 6 deposit. The ware is a successor to the Low Countries Highly Decorated ware and Flemish redwares which were produced in the later 12th to early 14th centuries and is probably datable to the 14th century. The sherd comes from a jug.

Humberware (HUM)

Sixty sherds of Humberware were recovered from Period 6 deposits. Humberware is a generic term for fine-textured red earthenwares produced using a specific range of typological traits and manufacturing methods in the Humber estuary and Vale of York. Production of Humberware took place on the Blue Bridge Lane site in the later 14th century but none of these sherds shows sign of being waste. Nevertheless, there is such a high quantity of Humberware waste on the site, intrusive in earlier deposits that there must be

serious doubt as to whether any of these sherds is contemporary. Furthermore, some later 12th-century splash-glazed ware sherds could easily be mistaken for Humberware (although they tend to be thinner-walled and splash-glazed). In most cases, the sherds occur in ones and twos but F396 produced 10 sherds and F424 produced 5 sherds.

Ten of the Humberware sherds come from jugs and four from unglazed drinking jugs (almost certainly intrusive from later 14th-century deposits). The remaining 46 sherds were too small to identify the form.

Lincoln Early Medieval Shelly Ware (LEMS)

Five sherds of Lincoln Early Medieval Shelly Ware were identified by Jane Young in Period 6 deposits. This ware is produced in a similar fabric to LFS and was probably produced in the later 12th to 13th centuries in the Lincoln area. One of the sherds comes from a jar and the remaining four sherds, all from one vessel, cannot be identified to form level.

Lincoln Fine-Shelled Ware and North Lincolnshire Fine-shelled Ware (LFS and NLFS)

Seven sherds of Lincoln Fine-Shelled ware and North Lincolnshire Fine-Shelled Ware were recovered from Period 6 deposits. The latter ware is slightly rougher to the touch than the former although in thin section the two wares are indistinguishable. Both were probably produced in central or northern Lincolnshire, close to the Jurassic ridge. Both wares were produced from the later 10th to the early 13th centuries. All the identified sherds come from jars, including one very small example, or are too small to be identified.

Unsources local wares (MEDLOC)

A single sherd from a jar from a Period 6 deposit could not be assigned to a ware type but was probably of fairly local origin (i.e. Vale of York).

Unsources regional imports (MEDX)

Six sherds from Period 6 deposits could not be assigned to a ware type but were probably of non-local or continental origin. They represent two vessels, both jugs (DR45 and DR46).

Red Sandy Ware

Eight sherds of Red Sandy ware were recovered from Period 6 deposits (1992). This ware requires further study to establish its source and whether or not it comes from one source or is an amalgamation of several sources. Seven of the sherds come from jugs and one from a dripping dish.

Picardy-type Whiteware (ROUE)

Three sherds from a northern French whiteware jug were recovered from Period 6 deposits. The decoration: triangular-sectioned red-firing strips under a plain lead glaze, suggest that this vessel was a Picardy-type whiteware jug (Hillewaert 1990). The precise date range of this ware is unknown, but is likely to be within the later 12th to 13th centuries.

Scarborough Ware (SCAR)

A single sherd of Scarborough ware was recovered from a Period 6 deposit (1979;Farmer and Farmer 1982). This ware was produced, apparently, in the later 12th to 13th centuries, although most examples from sites outside of Scarborough occur in mid 13th to 14th-century contexts.

Siegburg Proto-Stoneware (SIEG SANDY)

Three sherds of Siegburg Proto-Stoneware were recovered from Period 6 deposits. They may all come from the same vessel. This ware was produced at Siegburg, in the Rhine valley, in the later 13th and early 14th centuries (Beckmann 1974, Period 3). The sherds come from a small jug.

Staxton-type Ware (STAX)

Seventeen sherds of Staxton-type ware were recovered from Period 6 deposits. This ware was produced at several centres in northern England from the middle of the 12th century onwards. Thin-section and chemical analysis would be required to establish the source of these sherds.

York Gritty Ware (YG)

Two hundred and eighty-seven sherds of York Gritty ware (1990) were recovered from Period 6 deposits. They represent no more than 279 vessels. All the sherds come from wheelthrown, unglazed jars, mostly cylindrical with squared rims. There is as yet no known typological or fabric difference between the York Gritty ware used in the mid 11th to mid 12th centuries and that used in the later 12th and 13th centuries.

York Glazed Ware (YORK)

Three hundred and ninety-six sherds of York Glazed ware were present in Period 6 deposits. They represent no more than 290 vessels. York Glazed ware was probably produced in the Hambleton Hills area, perhaps in the same centres which later produced Brandsby-type ware. The ware contains a well-sorted angular quartz sand absent from Brandsby-type ware and is datable to the later 12th to mid 13th centuries.

Most of the sherds come from jugs (285 sherds) with the remainder coming from jars (104 sherds) and a pipkin. The form of 6 sherds could not be identified.

Most of the jug sherds are undecorated and have either a plain lead glaze or a copper-mottled glaze. However, examples decorated with vertical clay strips or pellets, sometimes combined, were present, as were roller-stamped sherds, where the roller stamped patterns include chevrons and rectangles.

York Splash-glazed Wares (YSP)

One hundred and thirty-three sherds of York Splash-glazed wares were present in Period 6 deposits. They represent no more than 86 vessels. The majority of these sherds have a light-coloured groundmass with coarse angular quartzose temper, probably mainly derived from Carboniferous sandstones (105 sherds). Fine red earthenware, probably produced in the Vale of York (possibly at York itself) were the next more common fabric (21 sherds) whilst seven sherds would require further study to characterise the fabric. York Splash-glazed Wares are probably in the main of early to mid 12th-century date but may have continued in use into the later 12th to early 13th centuries.

All of the sherds come from jugs.

Intrusive Pottery

A sherd of Cistercian ware (CSTN) and a sherd of Hambleton ware, both datable to the 15th or early 16th centuries, were present. Given that Period 6 pre-dates the late 14th-century potting activity, these sherds must be intrusive.

Stratigraphy

Fishergate House(YFH00)

Three features at Fishergate House, Period 6, produced pottery (Table 1).

Table 1

context group	BEVO	BRAN	HUM	RED SANDY	RPOT	TORK	YG	YORK	YSP	Grand Total
F263		5	9	1	3	1		2		21
F274			1					1		2
F284	1				4		1		6	12
Grand Total	1	5	10	1	7	1	1	3	6	35

F263

This feature is dated to the 14th century or later through the presence of Humberware.

F274

This feature is dated to the 14th century or later through the presence of Humberware.

F284

This feature is dated to the later 12th century or later through the presence of Beverley ware.

Blue Bridge Lane (YBB01)

Forty-two features on Blue Bridge Lane, Period 6, produced pottery (Table 2).

Table 2. Pottery from Blue Bridge Lane, Period 6 (by sherd count). Omitting clearly residual or intrusive material.

context group	BEVO	BRAN	CMW	DUTR	HAMB	HUM	LEMS	LFS	MAX	MEDLOC	MEDX	NLFS	RED SANDY	ROUE	SCAR	SIEG SANDY	STAX	YG	YORK	YSP	Grand Total
F004														2				14	7	2	25
F044	4	2							2	1							1	93	1	8	112
F190																		1			1
F191						1															1
F230																			1		1
F232						2											1	10	2	4	19
F234						1												1			2
F237									1								2	11	4	1	19
F239	2	15				2		1					2				1	20	23	9	75
F249																		1			1
F250	1				1	1											1	11	4	7	26
F251													1			1			7	1	10
F252	1			1		1				6			5		1	2	1	13	275	18	324
F268		1												1				3		1	6
F271																		2			2
F276																		2			2
F284	2																	7	24	2	35
F313		1																			1
F317																			1		1
F337																		3	1	3	7
F347																		1	1		2
F357																	1	5	3	5	14
F393						2		1	2									2	6	1	14

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F395																	1	4	2	4	11
F396		1	1			29												8		1	40
F400																	1	5	1		7
F418												1					4	22	13	10	50
F422	32					1	5	1										26		41	106
F424						5												8	9	4	26
F426																				1	1
F430																		1	1	1	3
F440																			1		1
F459								2									1				3
F481																			1		1
F488																			1		1
F489																		1			1
F503						2											1	2	3	1	9
F545								1										5		1	7
F547						1											1	3		1	6
F548						1												1	1		3
F549						1															1
F551																		1			1
Grand Total	42	20	1	1	1	50	5	6	5	1	6	1	8	3	1	3	17	287	393	127	978

F004

The fill of this feature can be dated to the later 12th or early 13th century by the presence of York Glazed ware. The fill also contains a sherd of Picardy-type ware, which might indicate an early 13th-century date.

F044

The fill of this feature includes 112 potentially contemporary sherds, of which the latest type present is Brandsby-type ware (2 sherds). If these are intrusive, or a mis-identification of York Glazed ware, then the fill would date to the later 12th or early 13th century. If not, a mid 13th-century date is most likely.

F190

A single sherd of York Gritty ware dates the fill of this feature to the mid 11th century or later.

F191

A single sherd of Humberware dates the fill of this feature to the early 14th century or later.

F230

A single sherd of York Glazed ware jar dates the fill of this feature to the later 12th century or later.

F232

The fill of this feature produced 19 potentially contemporary sherds, of which the latest type present was Humberware (2 sherds), which would date the deposit to the early 14th century or later. However, the remainder of the sherds suggest a late 12th to mid 13th century date.

F234

The fill of this feature produced two potentially contemporary sherds; one is of Humberware and would date the deposit to the early 14th century or later whilst the other is a York Gritty ware sherd which dates to the mid 11th century or later.

F237

The fill of this feature produced 18 potentially contemporary sherds. The latest type present is York Glazed ware, dating the deposit to the later 12th century or later.

F239

The fill of this feature produced 75 potentially contemporary sherds of which the latest sherds present are Humberware and Brandsby-type ware, dating the deposit to the early 14th century or later. The fill also contains a substantial quantity of later 12th to mid 13th-century types.

F249

The fill of this feature contains a single sherd of York Gritty ware which dates the deposit to the mid 11th century or later.

F250

The fill of this feature produced 26 potentially contemporary sherds, of which the latest types were single sherds of Hambleton ware and Humberware. However, the Hambleton ware ought to date to the 15th century and therefore be intrusive in this feature. The remaining sherds are all of later 12th to early 13th-century types.

F251

The fill of this feature produced 10 potentially contemporary sherds, of which the latest type is a sherd of Siegburg proto-stoneware, which dates the deposit to the later 13th century or later.

F252

The fill of this feature produced 374 potentially contemporary sherds. The latest types are Siegburg proto-stoneware, Scarborough ware, Low Counties Redware and Humberware. These would date the deposit to the early 14th century or later. However, the feature also produced a large quantity of York Glazed ware, including smashed vessels which are unlikely to be residual. The fill might therefore date to the later 13th century, at a time when York Glazed ware was still in use. The absence of Brandsby-type ware is notable.

F268

The fill of this feature produced 6 sherds of which the latest type present is Brandsby-type ware, dating the fill to the later 13th century or later. The remaining sherds are of later 12th to early 13th-century types, including a sherd of the Picardy-type whiteware vessel.

F271

Two sherds of York Gritty ware date the fill of this feature to the mid 11th century or later.

F276

Two sherds of York Gritty ware date the fill of this feature to the mid 11th century or later.

F284

The fill of this feature produced 35 sherds of potentially contemporary pottery, all of later 12th to mid 13th century types.

F313

A single sherd of Brandsby-type ware dates the filling of this feature to the later 13th century or later.

F317

A single sherd of York Glazed ware jar dates the filling of this feature to the later 12th century or later.

F337

The fill of this feature produced 7 potentially contemporary sherds all possibly of later 12th to mid 13th-century date (including York Glazed ware).

F347

The fill of this feature produced two sherds of potentially contemporary pottery. The latest type is a York Glazed ware jug sherd, dating the fill to the later 12th century or later.

F357

The fill of this feature produced 14 sherds of potentially contemporary pottery. The latest type is a York Glazed ware, dating the fill to the later 12th century or later.

F392

The fill of this feature produced only sherds of Roman pottery.

F393

The fill of this feature produced 12 sherds of potentially contemporary pottery. The latest type is Humberware (2 sherds), dating the fill to the early 14th-century or later. The remaining sherds are likely to be of later 12th to mid 13th-century date.

F395

The fill of this feature produced 11 sherds of potentially contemporary pottery. The latest type is York Glazed ware, dating the fill to the later 12th century or later.

F396

The fill of this feature produced 40 sherds of potentially contemporary pottery. The latest types are Humberware and Coal Measures whiteware, dating the fill to the early 14th-century or later. The quantity of Humberware (29 sherds) and the fact that several of these sherds join (no more than 15 vessels in total) suggests that they are not intrusive. Such a high proportion of Humberware would be unusual in a deposit earlier than the later 14th century.

F400

The fill of this feature produced seven sherds of potentially contemporary pottery. The latest type is a York Glazed ware jar sherd, dating the fill to the later 12th century or later.

F418

The fill of this feature produced 50 sherds of potentially contemporary pottery. The latest type is York Glazed ware (10 jug sherds and 3 jar sherds), dating the fill to the later 12th century or later.

F422

The fill of this feature produced 106 sherds of potentially contemporary pottery. The latest type is a sherd of Humberware. However, the remaining sherds form a mid to late 12th-century assemblage containing smashed Beverley ware jugs and York Splash-Glazed jugs and a LEMS jar. No sherds of York Glazed ware were present, which suggests a mid 12th-century date for the fill.

F424

The fill of this feature produced 26 sherds of potentially contemporary pottery. The latest type is Humberware (5 sherds), dating the fill to the early 14th century or later.

F426

A single sherd of York Splash-Glazed ware dates the fill of this feature to the early 12th century or later.

F430

The fill of this feature produced three sherds of potentially contemporary pottery. The latest type is a York Glazed ware jug sherd, dating the fill to the later 12th century or later.

F439

The fill of this feature produced only Roman sherds.

F440

A single sherd of York Glazed ware dates the fill of this feature to the later 12th century or later.

F459

The fill of this feature produced three sherds of potentially contemporary pottery. The latest type is a Staxton-type ware jar sherd, dating the fill to the mid 12th century or later. The other sherds come from a LFS jar dated by Jane Young to between the mid/late 11th century and the mid 12th century.

F481

A single sherd of York Glazed ware dates the fill of this feature to the later 12th century or later.

F488

A single sherd of York Glazed ware dates the fill of this feature to the later 12th century or later.

F489

A single sherd of York Gritty ware dates the fill of this feature to the mid 11th century or later.

F503

The fill of this feature produced nine sherds of potentially contemporary pottery. The latest types are a York Glazed ware jug sherd, decorated with vertical applied strips and incised wavy lines, dating the fill to the later 12th century or later, and two sherds of Humberware, which would date the fill to the early 14th century or later.

F545

The fill of this feature produced seven sherds of potentially contemporary pottery. The latest type is a York Splash-glazed ware jug sherd, dating the fill to the early 12th century or later.

F547

The fill of this feature produced six sherds of potentially contemporary pottery. The latest type is a sherd of Humberware, dating the fill to the early 15th century or later. The next latest sherd is a Staxton-type ware jar sherd, dating the fill to the mid 12th century or later.

F548

The fill of this feature produced three sherds of potentially contemporary pottery. The latest type is a Humberware sherd, dating the fill to the early 14th century or later whilst the next latest is a York Glazed ware jug sherd, dating to the later 12th century or later.

F549

A single sherd of Humberware dates the fill of this feature to the early 14th century or later.

F551

A single sherd of York Gritty ware dates the fill of this feature to the mid 11th century or later.

Discussion

It is difficult to date the various Period 6 features accurately because there is clearly a large amount of residuality on the site by this time and there is also likely to be intrusion.

Furthermore, in numerous instances the latest sherds present in an assemblage are of Humberware, which typically consists of a couple of undiagnostic sherds in an assemblage which is otherwise datable to the later 12th to mid 13th centuries. It may be, then, that the Humberware is a mixture of intrusive sherds relating to the late 14th-century potting activity on the Blue Bridge Lane site together with some mis-identified York Splash-Glazed fine red earthenwares.

Omitting the Humberwares from consideration (at least for Blue Bridge Lane), the Period 6 features have *termini post quem* ranging from the mid 11th to the early 14th centuries.

There are six features which date to the mid 11th century or later: F190; F234; F249; F271; F276; F489 and F551. None produced more than 2 sherds, all of York Gritty ware, and it is likely that all are actually much later than their *terminus post quem*.

There are two features which date to the early 12th century or later: F426 and F545. The latter's fill contained seven sherds, but the actual deposition date is still likely to be later than the early 12th century.

Three features have fills dated to the mid 12th century (i.e. not containing York Glazed ware) and one of these, F422, contains a large assemblage. This then is the earliest positively-dated assemblage in Period 6. The other two features, F459 and F547, both produced only small assemblages which can only be given *termini post quem*.

Twenty-one features on Blue Bridge Lane, and one on Fishergate House, could be dated to the later 12th century or later, by the presence of York Glazed ware. Most of these also contained York Splash-Glazed ware and Beverley ware and are probably either of 12th-century date, or if of later date contain a substantial residual 12th-century component.

By contrast, there are only three features which can be dated to the later 13th century: F252; F268 and F313. Of these, the former contains a large assemblage which appears to be mixed (possibly a 14th-century and a late 12th/mid 13th-century assemblage) whilst the latter two are both very small.

Four assemblages seem to contain enough Humberware and other 14th-century types to say for certain that they date to the 14th century: F239; F393; F396 and F424 whilst F191 and F549, on the other hand, contain just single Humberware sherds.

There seems to be a definite lack of assemblages dominated by Brandsby-type ware, and of assemblages containing mainly Brandsby-type ware with a small proportion of Humberware. This suggests that the late 13th and early 14th centuries are under-represented both sites although sherds of this date range are present.

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