

Assessment of the Finds from Blenheim Street, Scarborough (OSA06 EV05)

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A small assemblage of finds was recovered from an archaeological evaluation at Blenheim Street, Scarborough, carried out by On-Site Archaeology Ltd (Site Code: OSA06 EV05).

The finds range in date from the earlier prehistoric period to the mid 19th century or later and include a sherd of Anglo-Saxon pottery, datable between the mid 5th and the mid 9th centuries. The earliest medieval pottery from the site is probably of early 13th century date.

Description

Forty-eight fragments were submitted for identification and assessment. They were recorded by sherd count (Nosh), the maximum number of vessels/objects represented (NoV) and weight in grams (Table 1).

Table 1

class	Sum of Nosh	Sum of NoV	Sum of Weight
ANBN	3	3	80
CBM	4	4	31
POTTERY	38	32	589
STONE	3	3	45
Grand Total	48	42	745

Animal Bone

Three fragments of animal bone were present. None show any sign of working and are probably debris from food preparation.

Ceramic Building Material

Four fragments of ceramic building material were present. Two were unidentifiable scraps and two were fragments of flat roof tiles with fabrics similar to that of Scarborough ware. They are therefore likely to be of similar, medieval date, perhaps later 12th to mid 14th century.

Pottery

Anglo-Saxon

A single fragment of early to mid Anglo-Saxon pottery was present. The fragment shows no great sign of abrasion and retains a black burnt food deposit on the interior. The fabric contains large angular fragments of flint, polished, rounded quartz grains and shiny rounded black iron-rich grains. These characteristics indicate that the vessel was not locally made but

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comes from an area where the superficial sands contain mainly material derived from lower and upper Cretaceous rocks. Similar fabrics have been found at four sites in Yorkshire: Heworth, Hornsea, Melton, Sancton and Swine and the vessel was therefore probably made somewhere in the East Yorkshire claylands. Thin section and chemical analysis would allow the source of the vessel to be determined with more accuracy.

Medieval

Twenty-seven sherds of medieval pottery were recorded (Table 2). They consist mainly of Scarborough ware (SCAR) together with eight sherds of Staxton-type ware (STAXT) and a single fragment of Low Countries Red Earthenware (DUTR).

Scarborough ware was produced from the late 12th to the mid 14th century and the collection includes part of a tubular-spouted jug, a type which was produced in the late 12th to early 13th centuries. The sherd consists of a strut which supported the spout and part of a panel with filled the space between the strut, the spout and the body. This panel was pierced with circular holes. Some of the sherds might be wasters or seconds, but there is no certain example of either. However, an unidentified form, consisting of a flat disk with a sanded base and rounded, knife-trimmed top, might be a piece of kiln furniture. Staxton-type ware was produced at a number of centres in Yorkshire but these sherds are probably from the Vale of Pickering, where this type was produced at Staxton and Potter Brompton between the mid 12th and the 14th (or even 15th) centuries. Low Countries Red Earthenware was produced at various sites in the Low Countries and occurs on east coast sites from the mid 14th to the 16th centuries.

Table 2

Form	Description	DUTR	SCAR	STAXT	Grand Total
BOWL				1	1
CAUL		1			1
JAR				7	7
JUG			5		5
	EXT CUGL		1		1
	EXT PLAIN GL		5		5
	GROUPED THUMBING (4 IMPRESSIONS);CUGL		1		1
	NECK WITH SUPPORT STRUT FOR TUBULAR SPOUT;CUGL; VERTICAL PANEL WITH PIERCED CIRCULAR HOLES		1		1
	ROD HANDLE WITH OLIVE GL		2		2
JUG?	CUGL		1		1
OBJECT	UNGLAZED CIRCULAR DISK WITH FLAT SANDED BASE AND ROUNDED UPPER SURFACE		2		2
Grand Total		1	18	8	27

Post-Medieval and Early Modern

Ten sherds of post-medieval and later 18th-century or later date were recorded. Post-medieval pottery is represented by a single fragment of glazed red earthenware (GRE). This type was produced at a number of centres from the late 16th century onwards. Late 18th-century and later pottery consisted of buff ware (NCBW), Transfer-printed ware (TPW) and miscellaneous refined whiteware (WHITE). Of these, NCBW and WHITE date to the mid 19th century and later whilst TPW has a wider date range, occurring from the later 18th century through to the 20th century.

Form	Description	GRE	NCBW	TPW	WHITE	Grand Total
-	BROWN MOTTLED EXT POSSIBLY SPONGED DEC				1	1
BOWL		1	2			3
CUP				1		1
JUG				1		1
OVAL DISH				1		1
PLATE				3		3
Grand Total		1	2	6	1	10

Assessment

Trench 1

Four contexts in Trench 1 produced finds. The latest finds from context 105 are of medieval date, possibly as early as the late 12th century. The other contexts, 101, 102 and 103, produced a mixture of medieval and early modern finds. The medieval finds included the Scarborough ware possible kiln furniture whilst one of the Scarborough ware flat roof tiles had been fired after breakage, a feature of wasters and seconds.

Trench 2

Finds were recovered from two contexts in Trench 2. The latest type from context 204 is the fragment of Low Countries Redware, probably dating deposition to the mid 14th century or later although the context also produced the tubular-spouted Scarborough ware jug. The finds from context 202 are of mid 19th-century or later date.

Further Work

The Anglo-Saxon potsherd is important evidence for the early history of Scarborough. It is not the first such sherd from the town but the previous discovery could not be found in Scarborough Museum and this sherd therefore provides the only evidence for the fabric of 5th to 9th-century pottery in the town. It should be studied using thin section and chemical analysis and compared with finds from elsewhere in York. At 2006/7 rates, a thin section, chemical analysis and report would cost £48.00 plus VAT.

None of the other finds require further work at this stage but the possibility that medieval pottery production took place in the area should be noted.

Retention

All the finds come from stratified deposits and should be retained for potential future re-examination.

Appendix 1

Context	class	Action	Trench	Description	Cname	Subfabric	Form	Use	Condition	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight
101	COMMENT		TR1	L18+	ZDATE					BS	1	1	0
101	POTTERY		TR1		TPW		JUG			BS	1	1	15
101	POTTERY		TR1	GROUPED THUMBING (4 IMPRESSIONS);CUGL	SCAR		JUG			B	1	1	65
101	POTTERY		TR1	UNGLAZED CIRCULAR DISK WITH FLAT SANDED BASE AND ROUNDED UPPER SURFACE	SCAR		OBJECT		SPALLED	BS	2	1	74
101	STONE		TR1	BATTERED PEBBLE WITH REENFRANT FILLED WITH BOULDER CLAY	STONE	FLINT	GEO			BS	1	1	40
101	STONE		TR1	BATTERED PEBBLE	STONE	FLINT	GEO			BS	1	1	4

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Context	class	Action	Trench	Description	Cname	Subfabric	Form	Use	Condition	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight
102	POTTERY		TR1	BROWN MOTTLING EXT POSSIBLY SPONGED DEC	WHITE		-			BS	1	1	1
102	COMMENT		TR1	M19+	ZDATE					BS	1	1	0
103	POTTERY		TR1		TPW		PLATE			B	1	1	1
103	POTTERY		TR1		GRE		BOWL			BS	1	1	3
103	POTTERY		TR1		STAXT		JAR			BS	3	3	11
103	CBM		TR1		MTIL	SCAR?	FLAT		OXID OVER BREAK	BS	1	1	17
103	POTTERY		TR1	ROD HANDLE WITH OLIVE GL	SCAR		JUG			H	2	1	69
103	POTTERY		TR1		SCAR		JUG			BS	4	4	42
103	POTTERY		TR1	CUGL	SCAR		JUG?		UNDERFIRED?	BS	1	1	13
103	COMMENT		TR1	L18+	ZDATE					BS	1	1	0
105	ANBN		TR1		ANBN					BS	1	1	18
105	COMMENT		TR1	L12+	ZDATE					BS	1	1	0
105	POTTERY	TS;ICPS	TR1		ESGS	FLINT;GSQ;R BLACK FE	JAR	BLACK DEPO INT		B	1	1	16
105	POTTERY		TR1	EXT CUGL	SCAR		JUG			BS	1	1	32
105	POTTERY		TR1	EXT PLAIN GL	SCAR		JUG			BS	5	1	26
105	POTTERY		TR1		STAXT		JAR	SOOTED EXT		BS	3	3	11
105	POTTERY		TR1		STAXT		BOWL			R	1	1	64

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Context	class	Action	Trench	Description	Cname	Subfabric	Form	Use	Condition	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight
202	COMMENT		TR2	M19TH+	ZDATE					BS	1	1	0
202	POTTERY		TR2		NCBW		BOWL			BS	2	2	16
202	POTTERY		TR2		TPW		CUP			R	1	1	8
202	POTTERY		TR2		TPW		OVAL DISH			R	1	1	11
202	POTTERY		TR2		TPW		PLATE			R	1	1	11
202	POTTERY		TR2		TPW		PLATE			BS	1	1	11
204	ANBN		TR2		ANBN					BS	2	2	62
204	CBM		TR2		MTIL					BS	2	2	7
204	POTTERY		TR2		STAXT		JAR		VABR	BS	1	1	3
204	POTTERY		TR2		DUTR		CAUL	SOOTED EXT		BS	1	1	12
204	POTTERY		TR2		SCAR		JUG			BS	1	1	7
204	POTTERY		TR2	NECK WITH SUPPORT STRUT FOR TUBULAR SPOUT;CUGL; VERTICAL PANEL WITH PIERCED CIRCULAR HOLES	SCAR		JUG			BS	1	1	67
204	CBM		TR2		MTIL	SCAR	FLAT			BS	1	1	7
204	COMMENT		TR2	L14+	ZDATE					BS	1	1	0
204	STONE				STONE	FLINT	BLADE			BS	1	1	1