

The Pottery and Clay Tobacco Pipes from Manor Road, Easingwold, North Yorkshire (EAS'06)

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An archaeological watching brief carried out by Fern Archaeology at Manor Road, Easingwold, produced a small collection of medieval and post-medieval pottery together with one sherd of either Iron Age or early Roman pot and two sherds of definite Roman date.

The finds include the complete profile of a wheelthrown jar from the fill of kiln 1013 and the complete profiles of two post-medieval vessels from the fill of Pit 1009.

Description

Pottery

Iron Age to Early Roman

A single abraded sherd of coarse pottery was recovered from context 1014, the backfill of feature 1013. The sherd has a coarse fabric (IASST) containing angular fragments of sandstone c.2-4mm across in a groundmass of poorly-mixed variegated clays. The light colour of the groundmass, where not blackened by carbon, suggest the use of a deltaic clay from the middle Jurassic or a boulder clay composed of redeposited middle Jurassic clay.

Roman

Two sherds of Roman date were recovered. The first is a small fragment of samian ware (S0), which was too small to identify either the source region or form, and the second is a sherd of Crambeck greyware (Monaghan 1997, B12). This ware came into use in the later 3rd century and therefore the two sherds could not have been in contemporary use.

Medieval

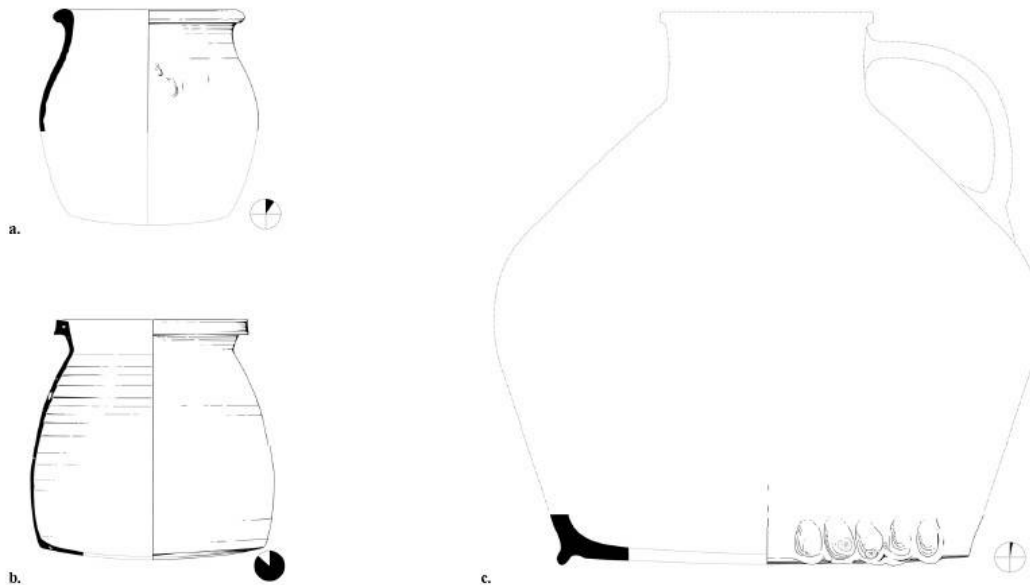


Figure 1 (illustrations by C Fern)

Much of the medieval pottery consists of sherds whose colour and form would probably have meant that they were classified as Yorkshire Gritty ware. However, examination at x20 magnification indicates that unlike York Gritty ware (Holdsworth 1995, which is completely absent from this site) the grits consist of fragments of a medium-grained sandstone with an iron-rich cement. This ware has recently been recognised as a distinct type of Yorkshire medieval pottery (Vince 2006, LEP1) and is interpreted as a coarser version of York Glazed ware, and one of the earliest products of the North Yorkshire whiteware pottery industry. Samples of the ware from Manor Road have been taken for analysis and for comparison with the unfired clay and sand found in and around Feature 1013 to see whether it is feasible for the ware to have been produced on this site.

A complete profile of a wheelthrown jar in this fabric was recovered from the fill of Feature 1013 (Fig 1b) and sherds from several other vessels were also present (Fig 1b). However, in total only 86 sherds were present, representing no more than 31 vessels. Furthermore, the complete profile from Feature 1013 has a sooting pattern typical of a vessel used in cooking, with soot on the outside of the vessel only. This pattern of sooting is rarely if ever found on vessels wasted during production.

Other wares of later 12th to early 13th-century date were also found on the site. They consist of a local red earthenware, again with a distinctive fabric but no formal name (Vince & Steane 2006, LEP2); sherds of York Glazed ware jugs and jars (YORK), and a Beverley-type glazed ware splash-glazed jug (a mid to late 12th-century type). The York glazed ware vessels include the base of a large rounded jug with groups of thumb impressions around the base (Fig 1c) and a body sherd from a vessel decorated with rectangular-toothed roller stamping (similar to that used on a Brandsby-type ware jug from York, Jennings 1992, No.80).

Later medieval and transitional medieval/post-medieval types were also present. They consist of single sherds of Brandsby-type ware (BRAN), Cistercian ware (CSTN) and Humberware (HUM). In addition, some of the Ryedale ware vessels from the site might also be contemporary with the Cistercian and Humberware vessels but most are probably of later 17th-/ early 18th-century date.

Post-medieval

Fifty-four sherds of post-medieval pottery were recorded, but most of these come from a single Frechen stoneware vessel, found in pot 1009. This vessel is a bottle, of which the entire profile is present (Fig 1). The vessel has the profile of the mid/late 17th century Frechen belarmine bottles but is substantially larger and has no medallions or applied male face. The simple base, with no footring, is typical of the latest Frechen bottles to be exported to England and similar vessels were being produced at Fulham, copying the Frechen forms closely, in the 1670s and 1680s (1999, Fig 97). The Fulham vessels seem to have been produced in graded sizes, ranging up to a 2 gallon capacity and it is probable that this Frechen vessel was also made to a fixed measure, perhaps close to a gallon.



Figure 2 (Photographer: C Fern)

Other wares of post-medieval date consist of Ryedale ware, produced at a variety of sites around the fringes of the North Yorkshire Moors, of which the closest to Easingwold is probably Yearsley, the site of the pottery of William Wedgwood, a relative of the Staffordshire Wedgwood family. The Ryedale wares include the complete profile of a small bowl with crude handles formed by apply a sausage of clay below the rim. Other post-medieval wares include sherds of Staffordshire slipware, including slip-trailed, white-slipped redwares (STRES), mottled ware vessels (STMO) and slip-trailed and combed slip examples (STSL). The white-slipped redwares were being produced by the 1660s although a few examples occur in 18th-century contexts. Mottled wares were being produced in Staffordshire by the 1680s (as recorded in Plott's History of Staffordshire, 1686) but are mainly an 18th-

century type whilst the latter slipwares include several vessels with dated inscriptions which indicate production from c.1680 into the early 18th century.

A single sherd of a white English salt-glazed stoneware bowl was present. This type (SWSG) was produced in the mid 18th century, from c.1730-60, but vessels often occur in association with later 18th century ceramics and were probably kept as heirlooms for several generations.

Finally, a single sherd of a glazed red earthenware of unknown source was present (GRE). Such vessels were produced from the later 16th to the 19th century but at Easingwold it is likely that the vessel post-dates the Ryedale industry and is of 18th or 19th century date.

Early Modern

Ten sherds of late 18th century or later date were recorded. With two exceptions the types present are factory-made products which are impossible to attribute to a production centre without marks or analysis of the fabric. The types present are 19th-century buff ware (NCBW); Nottingham Stoneware (NOTS); Pearlware (PEAR); Sunderland Coarseware (SUND); and Transfer-printed ware (TPW). The latest type present is NCBW, which does not occur in 18th-century deposits, and none of the types present need be later than the mid 19th century (but in most cases are of types which continued to be produced later).

Clay Tobacco Pipes

Eight fragments of clay tobacco pipe were recovered. From their bore diameters, none of these appear to be earlier than the 18th century. Two yellow glazed mouthpieces were found, in C1003, and two bowls. One of these, from C1010, is of a mid to late 18th-century form, similar to Mann's No.154 from Lincoln (Mann 1977). It is unmarked and of unknown source. The other, from C1003, has a three-dimensional moulded dog running from the stem to the back of the bowl and is of a late 19th century type (similar to a pipe from Lincoln which has a horse on the stem, Mann 1977, No.218)..

Discussion

Ploughsoils 1005, 1002/4 and 1001/3

Forty sherds were recovered from two deposits interpreted as ploughsoil, C1004 and C1005, and from the topsoil, C1003.

Sherds of Ryedale ware occur in the ploughsoil deposits together with sherds of medieval pottery, some of later 12th/early 13th century date and some later. The topsoil produced similar material together with post-medieval and early modern wares. The latest type from the topsoil is a late 19th century clay pipe.

Observation 1

Ditch 1007

Two sherds were recovered from the fill of ditch 1007. The later type is a sherd of Staffordshire slipware of mid/late 17th century date but the accompanying Ryedale ware could be contemporary.

Observation 2

Phase 1a: Features 1027 and 1013

Pottery was recovered from the fill of curved ditch 1027 and from the three backfill deposits in Feature 1013 (C1016, C1015 and C1014). Apart from small residual sherds from C1014 (IASST and B12) the only pottery type present is the coarse-gritted whiteware and its finer equivalent, York Glazed ware. The latter is represented by a single sherd from a jar, from C1014. Two of the coarse-gritted sherds, one from the fill of C1027 and the other from C1014, have spots of plain lead glaze, probably indicating that they were fired alongside glazed vessels.

At most, 24 vessels are represented in these various deposits, all jars. Eighteen have traces of external sooting indicating their use in cooking. None have any flaws (underfiring, overfiring, warping, cracking, atypical redox conditions) and there is no reason, other than their discovery associated with Feature 1013 to think that they are production waste. Nevertheless, preliminary comparisons of the unfired clay lumps with the pot fabric does suggest that the pots could have been made from this or similar sandy clay.

Phases 2 and 3: Pit 1009

Forty-six sherds from no more than 14 vessels were recovered from the fill of Pit 1009. Some of these sherds are clearly residual (Cistercian ware; York Glazed ware) whilst from their fragmentation it is likely that the Frechen stoneware, Ryedale ware bowl and Staffordshire slipware combed slip posset pot are contemporary. The sherd of Staffordshire Mottled ware and sherds from four more Ryedale ware bowls and one Ryedale ware jar are likely to also be part of this assemblage. As an assemblage of pottery, the group could be dated to the late 17th century (c.1680-1700) but fragments of a clay tobacco pipe of mid/late 18th century type suggest a later date. The bowl form and size is of a type not present anywhere in the country until the early 18th century and therefore an early 18th century date is the earliest possible for the filling of this pit. The Frechen stoneware was almost certainly produced no later than the 1680s, after which time English stonewares dominated the stoneware market, but since the vessel is a storage vessel it is quite possible for it to have been in use for 30 or 40 years.

Observation 4

Phase 3: Complex 1040

Three sherds were recovered from complex 1040, recorded in section only. Since they include a sherd of buff ware the filling cannot be any earlier than the early 19th century.

Sequence of activity

Combining the evidence from the various observations, it seems that there was a scatter of Iron Age and Roman pottery, all small and abraded sherds, indicating occupation nearby during that period. Since two of these sherds occur in the backfill of Feature 1013 they cannot be interpreted as being brought to the site with manure during the phase of agricultural activity.

Feature 1013 and the earlier Ditch 10127 were probably in use in the late 12th or early 13th centuries. The sherds of York Glazed ware and Beverley-type glazed ware, found in the ploughsoil, might indicate that ploughing started whilst these types were still current, i.e. in or before the mid 13th century, and the presence of Ryedale ware indicates that ploughing continued into the late 15th century if not later. The backfill of ditch 1007 is probably of mid 17th century or later date and the filling of Pit 1009, is probably of early to mid 18th century date. Both of these features cut the ploughsoil, C1004. Finally, pottery and clay tobacco pipes from complex 1040 and the topsoil indicate activity in the area in the 19th century extending into the second half of the century on the basis of a moulded clay pipe.

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