

Assessment of finds from the Rabbit-Proof Fence, Byland Abbey (BLA'07)

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A moderate quantity of pottery, clay tobacco pipes and ceramic building material was recovered from an archaeological watching brief carried out during the construction of a rabbit-proof fence around the ancient monument of Byland Abbey, North Yorkshire, carried out by Field Archaeology Associates Ltd. The finds range in date from the later 12th or 13th century to the late 18th to 20th centuries and include one fragment of probable kiln waste which is further evidence for the existence of a pottery production site in the area in the medieval period.

Description

Ceramic Building Material

Two fragments of ceramic building material were recovered. One is too small to identify and the other is a fragment of cylindrical field drain of mid 19th century or later date.

Clay Tobacco Pipes

Eight fragments of clay tobacco pipe were recovered. Two have bore diameters which suggest a later 17th to 18th-century date. One bowl is of similar date, having a bulbous bowl and pronounced circular heel. A band of triangular rouletting runs around the rim. General size suggests a date in the late 17th century. The remaining fragments are of later 18th or 19th century date and include one small rounded bowl with a moulded foliage heel.

Fired clay

A single fragment of fired clay was recovered. The fragment shows no sign of deliberate forming but is coated with a thick glaze and has a single scar from a whiteware vessel attached. It was probably used in a pottery kiln to support or separate vessels. Pottery wasters of later 12th to 13th-century date have been previously recovered from the Byland Abbey site and this is possibly associated with that production. Thin section and chemical analysis would enable the clay to be compared with that of the pottery fragments, which have been analysed (Vince 2007).

Pottery

Medieval

Fifteen sherds of medieval pottery were recovered. Three of these are of York Glazed ware (YORK) which was produced locally in the later 12th to mid 13th centuries, as demonstrated by the wasters mentioned above. The remainder were of Brandsby-type ware, also produced in the Hambleton Hills area, from the later 13th to the 15th century. One of the York Glazed ware sherds is possibly a piece of kiln furniture and comes from a slab of clay with glaze over the edges. The remaining sherds are from jugs apart from one Brandsby-type sherd which might be from a jug or a bowl.

Post-medieval

Thirty-eight sherds of post-medieval pottery were recovered. Some are of types which cannot be closely dated, such as blackware (BL) or glazed red earthenware (GRE). Others probably date from the earlier part of the period, from the later 16th to the mid 17th centuries. These include Ryedale ware and Raeren stoneware (RAER), both which span the dissolution period, and Frechen stoneware (FREC) which is probably dissolution period or later. The remaining sherds are of later 17th to mid 18th-century types. They consist of London stoneware (LONS); Staffordshire embossed ware (STEM); Staffordshire mottled ware (STMO); Staffordshire light-bodied slipware (STSL) and white saltglazed stoneware. All three sherds of the latter ware are of an early type, made from a Coal Measure light-firing clay which was then covered with a thick white slip (SWSG SLIPPED). As a group, these later types are likely to be of early 18th-century date.

Early Modern

Twenty-eight sherds of later 18th and 19th-century wares were recorded. These include some vessels with sponged decoration which are probably of mid 19th century or later and include no sherds of Creamware. Therefore, as a group these sherds seem to date to the mid 19th century or later.

Assessment

Chronological interpretation

These finds could span the period from the later 12th to the 19th centuries. However, the quantity of later 12th to mid 13th-century material is very low and it is quite likely that no material earlier than the mid 13th century is actually present in the collection. Furthermore, there is a lack of Humberware, which might indicate that there is little material of later 14th or 15th-century date in the collection. On the other hand, the Byland area is at the extreme north-eastern fringe of the distribution of Humberware and, given the proximity to Brandsby, it is quite possible that the abbey was using Brandsby-type wares whilst areas further south and west were using predominantly Humberware.

There is a small amount of material which might date to the period of the dissolution but most of the post-medieval finds probably date to the later 17th and early 18th centuries. There is

then another possible gap in deposition, during the mid 18th to early 19th centuries followed by the final phase, which includes the one fragment of field drain.

Retention

All of the material should be retained for potential future study.

Further work

Analysis of the possible kiln furniture and glaze-covered fired clay would be able to confirm or reject the identification as well as supplying information on the character of the clay used to make kiln furniture and how that compared with the composition of the pottery itself.

Costing

Two samples for thin section and chemical analysis (ICPS) = £100.00 plus VAT

Bibliography

Vince, Alan (2007) Characterisation of Pottery and Ceramic Building Material from Byland Abbey, North Yorkshire. AVAC Reports 2007/64 Lincoln,

Appendix 1

class	period	Context	REFNO	Action	cname	subfabric	Form	Description	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight
POTTERY	emod	1154	250		WHITE		PLATE		B	1	1	14
POTTERY	med	1154	251		BRAN		JUG	STRAP HANDLE WITH 4 GROOVES	H	1	1	100
POTTERY	emod	1154	252		WHITE		CUP	BROWN INDUST SLIP LINE INT	BS/H	1	1	2
POTTERY	pmed	1154	253		GRE		BOWL	FLANGED	BS	1	1	25
POTTERY	pmed	1154	254		RYEDALE		JAR		BS	1	1	6
PIPECLAY	emod	1154	255		PIPECLAY		CLAYPIPE	18-19TH CENTURY BORE	STEM	1	1	2
POTTERY	med	1154	256		BRAN		JUG		BS	1	1	7
POTTERY	pmed	1154	257		LONS		JAR		BS	1	1	1
POTTERY	pmed	1154	258		LONS		JAR		BS	1	1	12
POTTERY	pmed	1154	259		RYEDALE		BOWL	GLAZED INT/EXT; EXT GROOVES	BS	1	1	3
POTTERY	med	1154	260		YORK		JUG	WAVY GROOVES	BS	1	1	13
POTTERY	pmed	1154	261		BL		JAR		BS	1	1	1
POTTERY	med	1154	262		BRAN		JUG		BS	1	1	8
PIPECLAY	emod	1154	263		PIPECLAY		CLAYPIPE	19TH CENTURY BOWL; FOLIAGE ALONG BASE, NO SPUR	BOWL	1	1	8
POTTERY	pmed	1154	264		RYEDALE		JUG	WAVY GROOVES	BS	1	1	12
POTTERY	pmed	1154	265		RYEDALE		JAR	BUCKET HANDLED; ROD HANDLE WITH THUMBING ALONG BOTH SIDES	BS	1	1	33
POTTERY	pmed	1154	266		RYEDALE		JUG	STRAP HANDLE	H	1	1	23

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<http://www.postex.demon.co.uk/index.html>

A copy of this report is archived online at

<http://www.avac.uklinux.net/potcat/pdfs/avac2007106.pdf>

class	period	Context	REFNO	Action	cname	subfabric	Form	Description	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight
POTTERY	pmed	1154	267		RYEDALE		BOWL		BS	1	1	5
POTTERY	pmed	1154	268		SWSG	SLIPPED	TANK		BS	1	1	4
POTTERY	pmed	1154	269		STSL	BROWN SLIP	CUP	WHITE SLIP BLOB	BS	1	1	1
POTTERY	pmed	1154	270		RYEDALE		BOWL		BS	1	1	6
CBM	emod	1154	271		PMTIL		FIELD DRAIN		BS	1	1	1
POTTERY	pmed	1154	272		RYEDALE		BOWL		BS	1	1	6
POTTERY	pmed	1154	273		RYEDALE		BOWL		BS	1	1	3
POTTERY	pmed	1154	274		RYEDALE		BOWL	GLAZE INT/EXT	BS	1	1	4
FCLAY	med	1154	303	TS;ICPS	FCLAY		KILF?	ASH GLAZE/GLAZE; POSS SHERD ADHERING	BS	1	1	125
POTTERY	pmed	1154	310		SWSG	SLIPPED	TANK	BROWN GLAZE ROUND RIM	R	1	1	3
POTTERY	pmed	1154	393		SWSG	SLIPPED	TANK		BS	1	1	4
POTTERY	pmed	1154	394		STEM		BOWL/DISH		BS	1	1	1
POTTERY	med	1154	395		BRAN		JUG		BS	1	1	14
POTTERY	pmed	1154	396		GRE		BOWL		BS	1	1	10
POTTERY	emod	1154	397		PEAR		BOWL	BLUE SPONGING EXT	BS	1	1	1
POTTERY	med	1154	398		BRAN		JUG	WAVY GROOVE	BS	1	1	20
POTTERY	med	1154	399		BRAN		JUG/BOWL	GLAZE INT/EXT	BS	1	1	6
POTTERY	med	1154	400		BRAN		JUG		BS	1	1	11
POTTERY	med	1154	401		BRAN		JUG		BS	1	1	9
POTTERY	med	1154	402		BRAN		JUG	GLAZED INT/EXT	BS	1	1	10

class	period	Context	REFNO	Action	cname	subfabric	Form	Description	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight
POTTERY	pmed	1154	403		RYEDALE		BOWL		R	1	1	43
POTTERY	emod	1154	404		PMLOC		FLP		BS	2	1	1
POTTERY	emod	1154	405		NOTTS		JAR		BS	1	1	3
POTTERY	emod	1154	406		TPW		PLATE		R	1	1	2
POTTERY	emod	1154	407		NOTTS		TANK		BS	1	1	1
POTTERY	pmed		408		RYEDALE		BOWL		BS	1	1	2
POTTERY	pmed	1154	409		FREC		DJ	STAMPED DEC	BS	1	1	20
POTTERY	med	1154	411		BRAN		JUG		BS	1	1	12
PIPECLAY	pmed	1154	411		PIPECLAY		CLAYPIPE	1660-1690 SHAPE SIMILAR TO MANN 1977, 94 BUT WITH TRIANGULAR ROULETTING AND PRONOUNCED HEEL	BOWL	1	1	14
PIPECLAY	pmed	1154	412		PIPECLAY		CLAYPIPE	17-18TH CENTURY BORE	STEM	1	1	4
CBM	med	1154	413		CBM		CBM		BS	1	1	3
POTTERY	med	1154	414		BRAN		JUG		B	1	1	54
POTTERY	pmed	1154	415		RYEDALE		BOWL	GLAZED INT/EXT	BS	1	1	9
POTTERY	pmed	1154	416		RYEDALE		BOWL	GLAZE INT/EXT	BS	1	1	20
POTTERY	med	1154	417		YORK		JUG	KNIFED BASE	B	1	1	25
POTTERY	pmed	1154	418		RAER		DJ		BS	1	1	10
POTTERY	med	1154	419		BRAN		JUG	GLAZED INT/EXT	BS	1	1	3
POTTERY	pmed	1154	420		STMO		TANK		B	1	1	9
POTTERY	pmed	1154	421		RYEDALE		BOWL		BS	1	1	10
PIPECLAY	pmed	1154	422		PIPECLAY		CLAYPIPE	17TH CENTURY BORE	STEM	1	1	1

class	period	Context	REFNO	Action	cname	subfabric	Form	Description	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight
PIPECLAY	emod	1154	423		PIPECLAY		CLAYPIPE	18-19TH CENTURY BORE	STEM	1	1	3
PIPECLAY	emod	1154	424		PIPECLAY		CLAYPIPE	18-19TH CENTURY BORE	STEM	1	1	5
POTTERY	pmed	1154	425		BL		BOWL		BS	1	1	16
GEO	nd	1154	426		GEO		GEO		BS	1	1	19
POTTERY	emod	1154	510		SUND		BOWL		BS	1	1	9
POTTERY	med	1154	511	TS;ICPS	YORK		KILF?	FRAG GLAZED ON SURFACES	BS	1	1	6
POTTERY	pmed	1154	512		RYEDALE		BOWL	HANDLED - JOIN VISIBLE	BS	1	1	34
POTTERY	emod	1154	513		PEAR		BOWL	BLUE SPONGING INT/EXT	BS	1	1	3
POTTERY	pmed	1154	514		BL		BOWL		BS	1	1	15
POTTERY	emod	1154	515		SUND		BOWL		BS	1	1	1
POTTERY	emod	1154	516		ENGS		JAR		BS	1	1	24
POTTERY	emod	1154	517		PMLOC		FLP		BS	1	1	2
POTTERY	emod	1154	518		NOTTS		BOWL		BS	1	1	3
POTTERY	emod	1154	519		WHITE		PLATE		BS	1	1	1
POTTERY	pmed	1154	520		STSL		CUP		BS	1	1	1
POTTERY	emod	1154	521		TPW		BOWL		BS	1	1	1
POTTERY	emod	1154	522		PEAR		LARGE JAR	SPONGING EXT	BS	1	1	8
POTTERY	pmed	1154	523		FREC		DJ		BS	1	1	32
POTTERY	emod	1154	524		PEAR		PLATE		B	1	1	1
POTTERY	emod	1154	525		TPW		CUP		B	1	1	1
POTTERY	emod	1154	526		WHITE		BOWL	PALE GREEN INDUST GLAZE	BS	1	1	1
POTTERY	emod	1154	527		WHITE		BOWL	INDUST BLUE GLAZE EXT	BS	1	1	1

class	period	Context	REFNO	Action	cname	subfabric	Form	Description	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight
POTTERY	emod		528		WHITE		BOWL	GREEN SPONGED EXT	BS	1	1	14
POTTERY	emod	1154	529		TPW		PLATE		BS	1	1	3
POTTERY	pmed	1154	530		RYEDALE		BOWL	FLANGED	BS	1	1	19
POTTERY	pmed	1154	531		STSL		POSSET	BROWN SLIP DEC	BS	1	1	6
POTTERY	emod	1154	532		SUND		BOWL		R	1	1	12
POTTERY	emod	1154	533		PEAR		PLATE	BANDS INDUST BLUE SLIP	R	1	1	1
PIPECLAY	emod	1154	534		PIPECLAY		CLAYPIPE	18-19TH CENTURY BORE	STEM	1	1	1
POTTERY	pmed	1154	535		STMO		BOWL	FLANGED	BS	1	1	5
POTTERY	emod	1154	536		PEAR		BOWL	BLUE SPONGED INT	BS	1	1	1
POTTERY	emod	1154	537		PEAR		PLATE		BS	1	1	1
POTTERY	emod	1154	538		PEAR		PLATE		B	1	1	1
POTTERY	emod	1154	539		TPW		JAR	MARMALADE JAR 'THE ON..'	BS	1	1	8
POTTERY	pmed	1154	540		BL		BOWL		BS	1	1	4
POTTERY	pmed	1154	NONE		BL		JAR		BS	1	1	4