

## **The Pottery from West Cowick (WCD'08)**

### ***Alan Vince and Kate Steane***

Archaeological investigations at West Cowick, East Yorkshire, undertaken by Field Archaeology Associates Ltd, revealed a single deposit, 1003, containing a moderate-sized pottery assemblage.

Study of this assemblage by the authors established that the earlier finds are probably of later 13<sup>th</sup> to mid 14<sup>th</sup>-century date but that the majority of the finds consist of Humberware, including production waste. Analysis of a sample of this waste indicates that the site was producing vessels with an overfired brown slip, a type thought to have been current in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. No later Humberware was present in the collection and a small number of sherds of post-medieval pottery suggest that if there had been later activity it should be represented in the collection.

### **Description**

#### **Ceramic Building Material**

Two small fragments of brick were recovered. Neither show any sign of industrial use and no dimensions could be measured.

#### **Fired Clay**

A single fragment of fired clay was found. This may have been part of a kiln superstructure or a piece of kiln furniture, such as a support. It has a noticeably finer fabric than the Humberware from the site and is probably an indication of the character of the parent clay to which fine sand was added to produce Humberware. Samples were taken for chemical analysis (Sample V5013).

#### **Pottery**

##### **Beverley Glazed ware**

A sherd from a high-fired glazed jug with square-toothed roller-stamping on the body is probably Beverley Glazed ware (BEVO2B), of later 13<sup>th</sup> to mid 14<sup>th</sup> century date. It is not abraded, but given the firing it would probably survive in a soil horizon without weathering for centuries.

##### **Humberware**

Seventy-nine sherds of Humberware (HUM) were present. These include a small quantity of definite, overfired and warped waste sherds. Most are too altered to identify the form or any

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typological details. However, there was a general similarity in appearance between the less high-fired areas of the waster sherds and some of the plain and brown-slipped jugs. Since the latter are a diagnostic type, datable to the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Watkins 1987), a small sample of sherds of this type (4 in total) were taken for chemical analysis and comparison with samples of wasters (5 in total). The results indicate that it is very likely that the slipped jugs were produced on site, and therefore that pottery production was taking place in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

A single example of an unglazed drinking jug was recovered. This form was current in the later 14<sup>th</sup> century but there is no reason to believe that this was a waster or produced on the site.

Five examples of flat-based squat jars with everted rims were present. Such vessels were probably made in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries and these examples might have been produced on site although they show no evidence for firing faults (but neither do they have any traces of sooting or internal deposits, common on this form).

Twenty-eight sherds of jugs with either no glaze or plain lead glaze were present. Eight fragments came from large oval sectioned handles, ranging from 30mm to 54mm in width. These were usually decorated with between one and five grooves running down the back and had thumb impressions on either side of the rim/handle join. Decoration on the body consisted of horizontal grooves, noted on just two sherds. Three base sherds were present, two of which had thumbing around the angle and the third had an internal glaze.

The jugs with an overfired brown slip had similar characteristics to the plain jugs, with three oval-sectioned handles (29, 35 and 41mm wide) and one body sherd with wavy combed decoration (Fig 3). The rims are either flat-topped (Fig 1) or rounded and there is a slight collar on some examples (Fig 2). The oval-sectioned handles are luted to the body and thumb impressions were used on either side of the rim/handle join (Fig 1) and as a group of three impressions on the body/handle join (Fig 4).

### Brownware

Three sherds of Brownware (BERTH) were present. This is a post-medieval ware in which the glaze is coloured with added manganese or iron, giving it a mottled brown appearance. The sherds include one from a large jar, one from a jar and one from a jug. This ware is mainly of later 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>-century date.

### Glazed Red Earthenware

Three sherds of glazed red earthenware (GRE) were present. All came from internally-glazed bowls. This ware has a long period of currency, from the later 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## Discussion

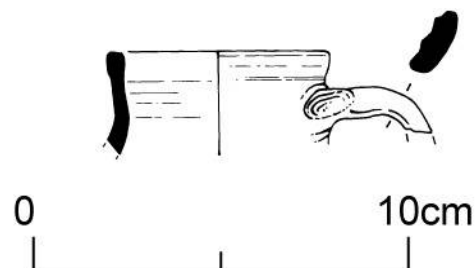
The chemical analysis (Vince 2008) confirms that the fired clay, pottery waste and jugs with over-fired brown slip were probably all made from similar clays. In addition, an unknown number of the plain jug and jars in the collection might also have been made on site. However, none of these types can be closely dated and based on the brown-slipped vessels we can be certain that pottery production took place in the 16<sup>th</sup> century but not before.

The scatter of post-medieval coarseware on the site suggests that there was little activity on the site in the later 16<sup>th</sup> century and later.

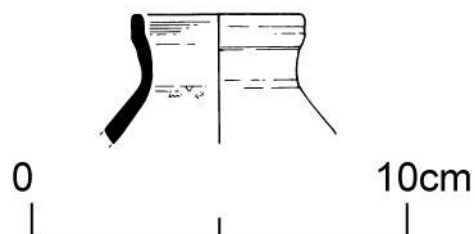
## Bibliography

Vince, Alan (2008) Characterisation Studies of Humberware from West Cowick, East Yorkshire (WCD'08). AVAC Reports 2008/49 Lincoln,

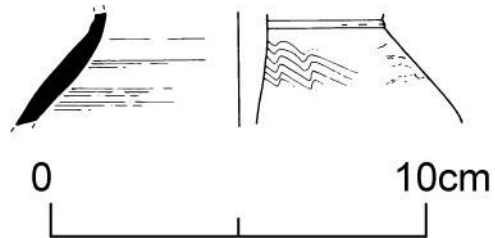
Watkins, J. G. (1987) "The pottery." in A. Armstrong and B. S. Ayers, eds., Excavations in High Street and Blackfriargate, Hull Old Town Rep Ser 5



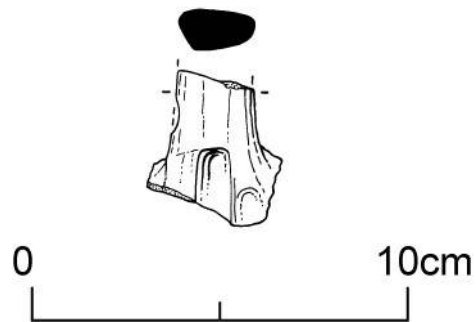
*Figure 1 WCD'08 Brown-slipped Humberware jug with oval-sectioned handle*



*Figure 2 WCD'08 Brown-slipped Humberware jug*



*Figure 3 WCD'08 Brown-slipped Humberware jug with wavy combed decoration on shoulder*



*Figure 4 WCD'08 Brown-slipped Humberware jug. Oval-sectioned handle with thumb impressions at body join.*

## Appendix 1

TSNO	REFNO	Action	Context	class	Cname	Subfabric	Description	Form	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Condition	Use	Diam
			1003	POTTERY	BERTH			LARGE JAR	BS	1	1	71			0
			1003	POTTERY	BERTH			JAR	BS	1	1	9			0
			1003	POTTERY	BERTH		HANDLE SCAR	JUG	BS	1	1	45			0
			1003	POTTERY	BEVO2B		RECT RST	JUG	BS	1	1	15			0
V5013		ICPS	1003	FCLAY	FCLAY			FCLAY	BS	1	1	211			0
			1003	POTTERY	GRE			BOWL	BS	1	1	30	GLAZE FLAKING		0
			1003	POTTERY	GRE			BOWL	R	1	1	135		WORN RIM	400
			1003	POTTERY	GRE			BOWL	R	1	1	69			420
			1003	POTTERY	HUM		NARROW BODY	DJ	BS	1	1	18			0
			1003	POTTERY	HUM			JAR	R	1	1	139			240
			1003	POTTERY	HUM		FRAG	JAR	R	1	1	15			0
			1003	POTTERY	HUM		GLAZED INT	JAR	BS	2	2	109			0
			1003	POTTERY	HUM		GLAZED INT	JAR	B	1	1	138			0
			1003	POTTERY	HUM			JAR	R	1	1	64			180
			1003	POTTERY	HUM		NO GLAZE; STRAP HANDLE WITH TWO GROOVES, 30 ACROSS	JUG	R	1	1	134			100
			1003	POTTERY	HUM		STRAP HANDLE, 33 ACROSS	JUG	H	1	1	73			0
			1003	POTTERY	HUM		STRAP HANDLE, 5 GROOVES, 38 ACROSS	JUG	H	1	1	65			0
			1003	POTTERY	HUM		STRAP HANDLE, 5 GROOVES, 54 ACROSS	JUG	H	1	1	167			0
			1003	POTTERY	HUM		STRAP HANDLE, HANDLE JOIN	JUG	H/BS	1	1	149			0

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		1003	POTTERY	HUM		THUMBING OF HANDLE JOIN	JUG	BS	1	1	106		0
		1003	POTTERY	HUM			JUG	R	1	1	45		130
		1003	POTTERY	HUM		STRAP HANDLE, 4 GROOVES, 49 ACROSS	JUG	H	1	1	67		0
		1003	POTTERY	HUM		ONE THUMB	JUG	B	1	1	61		0
		1003	POTTERY	HUM		THUMBED BASE	JUG	B	1	1	49		0
		1003	POTTERY	HUM		GROOVES; LOWER HANDLE JOIN; FIVE THUMB NAIL INDENTS	JUG	BS	1	1	69		0
		1003	POTTERY	HUM		SHOULDER	JUG	BS	1	1	91		0
		1003	POTTERY	HUM		HANDLE JOIN	JUG	BS	1	1	55		0
		1003	POTTERY	HUM		STRAP HANDLE WITH ONE GROOVES; 43 ACROSS	JUG	H	1	1	104		0
		1003	POTTERY	HUM		STRAP HANDLE WITH TWO GROOVES; 34 ACROSS	JUG	H	1	1	66		0
		1003	POTTERY	HUM			JUG	R	1	1	18		100
		1003	POTTERY	HUM		HANDLE SCAR; THUMBED RIM	JUG	R	1	1	93		130
		1003	POTTERY	HUM		SHOULDER WITH GROOVES	JUG	BS	2	2	71		0
		1003	POTTERY	HUM		GLAZE INT; SPOTTING BASE EXT	JUG	BS	1	1	110		0
		1003	POTTERY	HUM		HANDLE JOIN; FIRING SCAR	JUG	BS	1	1	24		0
		1003	POTTERY	HUM		GLAZE INT/EXT	JUG	BS	1	1	160		0
		1003	POTTERY	HUM		GLAZED INT	JUG	B	1	1	186		0
V5008	ICPS	1003	POTTERY	HUM		HANDLE SCAR	JUG	R/H	2	1	149	WASTE; BLOATING, DISTORTION	120
		1003	POTTERY	HUM	PURPLE		JUG	BS	1	1	52		0
		1003	POTTERY	HUM	PURPLE	SQUASHED ROD HANDLE 29 ACROSS	JUG	H	1	1	56		0
		1003	POTTERY	HUM	PURPLE	FRAG	JUG	R	1	1	24		0
		1003	POTTERY	HUM	PURPLE		JUG	R	1	1	9		100

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V5015	Fig 2	ICPS;DR	1003	POTTERY	HUM	PURPLE		JUG	R	1	1	68		90
V5009		ICPS	1003	POTTERY	HUM			JUG	R	1	1	82	WASTE; BLOATING, DISTORTION	100
V5014	Fig 1	ICPS;DR	1003	POTTERY	HUM	PURPLE	STRAP HANDLE, TWO GROOVES, 35 ACROSS	JUG	R/H	1	1	118		120
V5010		ICPS	1003	POTTERY	HUM		HANDLE JOIN	JUG	BS	1	1	73	WASTE; DISTORTION	0
V5011		ICPS	1003	POTTERY	HUM			JUG	R	1	1	91	WASTE; BLOATING, DISTORTION	110
			1003	POTTERY	HUM		NO GLAZE	JUG/JAR	BS	6	6	107		0
			1003	POTTERY	HUM		DRIBBLE WHITE SLIP	JUG/JAR	BS	1	1	49		0
			1003	POTTERY	HUM		FULL GLAZE	JUG/JAR	BS	2	2	28		0
			1003	POTTERY	HUM		DRIBBLES WHITE SLIP/GLAZE	JUG/JAR	BS	2	2	48		0
V5017	Fig 4	ICPS;DR	1003	POTTERY	HUM	PURPLE	STRAP HANDLE, 41 ACROSS	JUG	H	1	1	108		0
			1003	POTTERY	HUM		DRIBBLES WHITE SLIP AND SPOTS GLAZE	JUG/JAR	BS	2	2	50		0
			1003	POTTERY	HUM			JUG/JAR	B	1	1	66	WASTE; DISTORTION	0
			1003	POTTERY	HUM			JUG/JAR	BS	1	1	81	WASTE; DISTORTION	0
			1003	POTTERY	HUM			JUG/JAR	BS	1	1	26	WASTE; DISTORTION	0
			1003	POTTERY	HUM			JUG/JAR	B	1	1	53		0
			1003	POTTERY	HUM			JUG/JAR	B	1	1	143		0
			1003	POTTERY	HUM			JUG/JAR	BS	1	1	56		0
V5016	Fig 3	ICPS;DR	1003	POTTERY	HUM	PURPLE	COMBED WAVY DEC	JUG	BS	1	1	94		0
			1003	POTTERY	HUM		DRIBBLE GLAZE	JUG/JAR	BS	1	1	71		0
			1003	POTTERY	HUM		SPOT GLAZE	JUG/JAR	BS	1	1	19		0
			1003	POTTERY	HUM		PATCHY GLAZE	JUG/JAR	BS	1	1	6		0

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		1003	POTTERY	HUM		JUG/JAR	BS	1	1	16	DECAYED GLAZE	0
		1003	POTTERY	HUM	NO GLAZE	JUG/JAR	B	3	3	183		0
V5012	ICPS	1003	POTTERY	HUM		JUG/JAR	BS	1	1	44	WASTE; DISTORTION	0
		1003	POTTERY	HUM	GLAZE SPOTTING BASE EXT	JUG/JAR	B	4	4	514		0
		1003	POTTERY	HUM		VESSEL	BS	2	2	132	WASTE; BLOATING, DISTORTION	0
		1003	POTTERY	HUM		VESSEL	BS	3	3	39	WASTE; BLOATING, DISTORTION	0
		1003	POTTERY	LHUM	COPPER GLAZE OVER WHITE SLIP	JUG	BS	1	1	67		0
		1003	CBM	PMTIL		BRICK	BS	2	2	95		0