Longstone Edge Romano-British pottery

A total of 84 sherds (369g) and 35 crumbs (1g) were recovered from the excavations. The sherds and crumbs were individually recorded by fabrics and form.

FABRICS

The sherds were examined by eye with selected use of a x30 binocular microscope and x10 hand lens. The sherds were divided into fabric groups (Fulford and Huddleston 1991, 41), such as grey ware or oxidised ware, with distinctive, known fabrics such as the Nene Valley ware and grog-tempered ware fabrics being given their own fabric codes.

Colour:	narrative description only.
Hardness:	after Peacock 1977.
	soft - can be scratched by a finger nail
	hard - can be scratched with a penknife blade
	very hard - cannot be scratched with a penknife blade
Feel:	tactile qualities.
	smooth - no irregularities felt
	rough - irregularities felt
	sandy - grains can be felt across the surface
	powdery – as sandy but finer grained than sandy
	leathery - smoothed surface like polished leather
	soapy - smooth feel like soap
Fracture:	visual texture of fresh break, after Orton 1980.
	smooth - flat or slightly curved with no visible iregularities
	irregular - medium, widely spaced irregularities
	laminar - 'stepped' appearance
	hackly - large and generally angular irregularities

Inclusions

Type:	after Peacock 1977
Frequency:	indicated on a 4-point scale - abundant, moderate, sparse and rare where abundant indicates the break is packed with an inclusion and rare indicates the break has only one or two of an inclusion.
Sorting:	indicates the homogeneity of size of inclusion
Shape:	after Orton 1980
	angular - convex shape, sharp corners
	subangular - convex shape, rounded corners
	rounded - convex shape, no corners
	platey - flat
Size:	fine - 0.1-0.25mm
	medium - 0.25-0.5mm
	coarse - 0.5-1mm
	very coarse - 1mm or greater

DBY: Derbyshire ware. Very hard with hackly or conchoidal fracture and rough feel, like "petrified goose-flesh" (Gillam 1939). Common ill-sorted, medium to coarse, angular quartz, including polycrystalline examples. Derbyshire ware was produced in both reduced and oxidised ware with a very wide range of colours (Gillam 1939 and Tomber and Dore 1998 DER CO), from grey to orange, buff, maroon and red. There are two types here – a light grey example (DBYa) and a darker grey example with red-brown core (DBYb). These appear to be from three vessels or, perhaps four; two cupped-rim jars in DBYa and one or two jars of unknown rim form in DBYb. These groups both belong to the DER CO fabric.

OAC1: Orange, soft fabric with hackly fracture and rough feel. Moderate, ill-sorted medium to coarse, subangular quartz, including some polycrystalline quartz, sparse, ill-sorted, fine to coarse, brown-red inclusions and ill-sorted, fine to medium-sized, rounded, soft white inclusions.

FLA: Off-white to buff fabric. Soft with powdery feel and smooth fracture. Rare, medium-sized, ill-sorted, rounded red-brown inclusions, sparse, fine, well-sorted, rounded red-brown inclusions, rare, medium, subangular quartz and possibly some subvisible quartz. The sherds in this fabric looked as if they had been burnt and were originally cream or white in colour. This compares with flagon fabrics common in the late first to second century in Derbyshire. White ware flagons, bowls and jars/beakers were made on Derby Racecourse and perhaps at other fort sites in Derbyshire.

Fabric	Sherd count	Sherd weight (g.)
DBY a	17	227
DBY b	91	123
FLA	6	12
OAC1	5	8
Total	119	370

At least five vessels were represented by these sherds: a DBYa plain cupped-rim jar, a DBYb jar with a beaded, cupped rim, a jar in DBYb, 6 white ware sherds from a jar or flagon and one large OAC1 sherd with four scraps from a jar. The FLA sherds from 1055, 1058 and 1080/81 showed signs of burning in that they were darker in colour than normal with some blackening suggestive of burning. Although not all the sherds were burnt, the fabrics were so similar that it appears unlikely that more than one vessel was represented. Both they and the OAC1 sherds were very abraded.

Hardly any of the DBY a and b sherds were abraded but some of the DBYb crumbs may have abraded edges. Derbyshire ware hardly ever abrades because it is so hard fired. Many tiny crumbs of DBYb were recovered, presumably as a result of the sieving policy adopted. Some of the larger, intact sherds had surface cracks and it may be that these cracks had formed during firing or post-firing burning. The splintering was perhaps caused by frost action on these existing weaknesses or alternatively the excessive ground movement in the area adversely affected sherds, perhaps lying between or near stones. An alternative explanation would be that post-firing burning might have resulted in this disintegration of the sherds.

The DBY a group sherds were larger and at least one of them had surface cracking and orange "halos" around some of the inclusions. It is difficult to be sure if this happened during manufacture or later burning but the sherd from 1090 looked more like a burnt sherd than an overfired sherd. Several other DBY a sherds had orange "halos" around some inclusions, sometimes extending into surface streaks of orange. This effect is known in grey ware kilns groups examined by the author but not from the Derbyshire ware kilns.

White wares are most common in the first to second centuries and become less common in the third century. The OAC1 sherds are of "pre-Derbyshire" ware type (Brassington 1971, 59; 1980, 33). This "ware" was a coarse, quartz-tempered fabric fired to an orange to buff colour and used to make rebated-rim jars at Derby Racecourse in a form also made in the finer oxidised and reduced wares made at the kilns (1971, nos. 204-25). The fabric is very similar to Derbyshire ware, except in respect to the hardness of firing, and is present at the Derbyshire ware kilns (Leary forthcoming). It has been identified in Derbyshire ware forms in Antonine and early third century deposits but may have been superceded in the third and fourth centuries (Leary forthcoming). The DBY cupped-rim jars (cf. Kay 1962 fig. 6 A19 and fig. 7 A70 and fig. 5 type A) were made at both Holbrook and Hazelwood kilns, Derbyshire. These two types are variations on the cupped-rim jar form and are both common throughout the life of the Derbyshire ware kilns. The plain cupped form is present in mid to late Antonine contexts at Derby (Dool *et al* 1985 fig. 42 no. 90 and fig. 43 no. 119) and the beaded, cupped rim form is present in an Antonine context at Chesterfield (UMAU report to developer and author's archive report). The sherds are, therefore not closely datable. If they were viewed as a contemporary group it would suggest a date somewhere in the mid-second to early or mid-third century. The DBY sherds, however, could be dated as late as the fourth century.

BARROW 1

All but six fragments of DBYb came from barrow 1. Tiny DBYb crumbs were recovered from sieving samples taken from the excarnation deposit (1056, one crumb), the stone mound (1095, three crumbs) and within tumble from the enclosure wall (1097, three tiny crumbs). Given the evidence for ground movement and the tiny size of these fragments, these might be satisfactorily explained intrusive material.

58 sherds and crumbs (60g) of DBYb were recovered from the mound (1004, 1052, 1055 1081/2, 1086, 1087, 3041 and 3042). Along with this material two small and rather abraded sherds of DBYa were also located within the mound (1058 and 1052 both c.2g.), two larger and abraded sherds of FLA and two crumb (5g and 6g from 1055 and 1058 and crumbs from 1081/2 respectively) and one abraded sherd of OAC1 (8g) with three crumbs (all from 1052). 3041/2 yielded a tiny fragment of OAC1 and two small sherds of DBYb. 1086 yielded two larger sherds of DBYa (7g and 29g.) including the beaded, cupped rim sherd.

The disturbed layers of the mound (1050, 1051, and 1080) yielded a further 20 sherds (53g) of Roman pottery. The sherds were slightly larger from this level. DBYb sherds were found in 1050, 1051 and 1080 (2, 11 and 6 sherds respectively) and a scrap of FLA was also found in 1050. . The DBYa sherds were all significantly larger than sherds of other fabrics and the remaining examples all came from 1090 and 1094, the stone capped pits.

BARROW 2

The pottery from barrow 2 was exclusively small bodysherds or crumbs of fabric DBYb, two crumbs, one small sherd and two sherds with one crumb coming from 2060 (Bateman's backfill), 2057 and 2073 respectively. 2057 and 2060 also yielded human bone fragments

INTERPRETATION

The larger sherds of DBYa came from the area of two stone capped pits, 1088 and 1089. The fabric of these sherds compare so closely as to suggest they come from the same vessel, a jar with a beaded, cupped rim, although no joins were found. If it is accepted that some of these sherds are burnt, this may be a ritual deposit linked to a cremation rite or to ritual feasts. The burnt FLA sherds from the mound deposits also suggest a cremation rite might be represented. Apart from the tiny scraps from barrow 2 phases 1-3 (1056, 1095 and 1097) and barrow 1 context 2073, all of the other Roman sherds were found contexts also containing human bone except 1004, 1086 and 1087, the latter two being clearly disturbed in the post-Mediaeval period.

The DBYb sherds had a widespread distribution and were found in both barrows 1 and 2 and, again, although few joins were found, none of which were cross-context, the fabrics were so similar as to suggest only one jar was represented. DBYb sherds were found in association with fabrics FLA, OAC1 and two sherds of DBYa, the last from a plain, cupped-rim jar. DBYa sherds were not found in association with sherds of the beaded, cupped-rim DBYa jar, except in the disturbed context 1086. Since some of the sherds are burnt, most of the sherds are found with human bone fragments and it appears that sherds from the same jar were found in different locations and barrows, it is suggested that the Roman pottery on the site is part of a non-domestic incident at the barrow sites Although scatters of human bone are present in the mound resulting from Bronze Age activity, the selection of sherds and the peculiar distribution of the Romano-British pottery raises the possibility that some of this bone scatter may belong to a much later period and ritial. This

may include deliberate deposition of broken sherds in the barrow and it may also include deposits of parts of cremations and burnt "grave pots". All the pots are incomplete and the FLA and OAC sherds represent a very small proportion of the original vessels.

Flagons are commonly associated with Roman inhumations in the first and second centuries and at Derby deposits of burnt sherds, predominantly flagons, along with burnt bone scatters, were found within the both inhumation and cremation pits. Here it was suggested these scatters were not fortuitous but resulted from associated cremation rites involving offerings of food left on the burning cremation pyre (Birss 1985, 267; Virgil Aeneid VI, 211ff). A high proportion of burnt sherds were also noted at the Derby Racecourse cemetery and interpreted variously as offerings to the dead set on potsherds, for which we have documentary evidence elsewhere in the Empire (Ovid, *Fasti ii*, 533-70), debris from meals eaten at the grave (Toynbee 1971, 50) or token grave goods (cf. Wenham 1968, 52). Romano-British burial studies tend to concentrate on the more or less complete burial within grave pits and this sort of archaeological evidence is frequently dismissed as a residual scatter rather than a deliberate deposition. It may be that the scatter of sherds here is part of a wide spread ritual pattern in the Roman period which is manifested here at an existing ritual site

Jones (1997, 26ff) has noted four possible primary cremation burials in Derbyshire barrows at Harley Hill, Ringham Low, Friden Hollow and Minninglow At Minninglow the pottery, from three incomplete Derbyshire ware jars, was fragmentary and burnt. The pottery from Friden Hollow is described as "partially hardened by the fire" (Bateman 1848, 54) and at Harley Hill at least seven cremations were found, one with a melon bead, along with layers of charcoal and burning in every part of the mound. Jones notes deposits of Roman pottery and coins in as many as 48 Derbyshire barrows and suggests a ritual interpretation. The pottery includes samian, Derbyshire ware, colour-coated ware, grey wares and possibly Black burnished ware and mortaria. The Roman sherds from barrows are universally small in size and at Minninglow Bateman suspected deliberate breakage had occurred. In no case have whole pots been reconstructed. Sadly the burnt or unburnt condition of the sherds has seldom been noted and they are mostly dismissed as casual losses (Barnatt and Collis 1996, 56) or left by visiting shepherds (Collis 1983, 101). The evidence outlined above suggests that these sherds may reflect hitherto unrecognised Romano-British ritual activity. This is worthy of study in its own right and the material should not simply be viewed as intrusive or disturbed. Associated material should be sought in the other artefactual and ecofactual assemblages.

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