

To: Jane Young, Pre-Construct Archaeology, 13 Church Road, Stow, Lincolnshire, LN1 2DE
From: David Dawson, Vicky & David Dawson Partnership, 44 Manor Orchard, Taunton,
Somerset, TA1 4SN
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**Hook Valley Farm, Wincanton, Somerset
HVFE13 TTNCM 134/2013**

The Pottery by David Dawson

Introduction

The pottery consists of a hundred sherds, with many too small to be able to ascribe the precise form of each parent vessel, but whose characteristic fabric types reflect the period mostly from the 11th century to the twentieth centuries but with four rather nondescript sherds, probably prehistoric, and no Roman material. The later collection is typical of detritus from domestic occupation over that period in this part of Somerset. As the Farm is near a major routeway (now the A303) it is not surprising that post-medieval wares from South Somerset and Verwood in south-east Dorset are found here.

To enable comparison and equivalents to be made with pottery from other sites, the fabric types have been defined as follows. The two probable prehistoric fabrics have been designated HVFPI and HVFP2. The hand-made coarse-ware fabrics, probably mostly locally made except where indicated, have been designated HPV01 to HPV05. The post-medieval earthenwares are readily identifiable to the area of production and have been designated by name. Then follows a description of each sherd or group of sherds by context.

Fabrics

HVFPI A very soft fired reduced poorly mixed laminar matrix, reoxidised buff on surfaces, abundant inclusions have entirely burnt away leaving a very corky texture similar to Bronze Age pottery from Wookey Hole, Context 2000.

HVFP2 Soft-fired reoxidised dark brown very lightweight corky matrix with all inclusions leached out. Context 3040.

HVF01 A smooth matrix with irregular abundant quartzitic grits and flint or chert up to 6mm in size; oxidised buff. 11th to 12th century. Similar to Ilchester B ware (Pearson 171). Contexts 3100, 3106.

HVF02 Hard-fired reduced micaceous matrix with about 10% mixed angular inclusions of quartz, chert, calcite and possible microfossils possibly derivative of the local Upper Greensand. 11th to 12th century. Contexts 104, 105, 304, 404, 2000, 2003, 2020, 2030.

HVF03 Soft-fired reoxidised buff matrix abraded to leave the mixed quartz and calcareous inclusions projecting from the surface. 11th to 12th century. Contexts 105, 2003, 2034.

HVF04 Hard-fired reduced dark grey micaceous matrix, reoxidised to dark buff on patches of the outer surface with abundant inclusions of less than 1mm oolitic limestone, 5-10%

inclusions of less than 0.5mm of rounded quartz, crushed quartz and flint and occasional iron-rich fragments. Contexts 2000, 2003, 2004.

HVF05 Medium- to hard-fired with a fine grainy matrix with a reduced grey core and reoxidised orange-red surfaces with irregular patches of reduction, rather abraded gritty feel. Inclusions of about 10% fine oolitic limestone and some crushed quartz and perhaps flint. Context 2003.

South Somerset wares. Soft-fired reduced grey core and reoxidised orange red laminar matrix with occasional iron-rich inclusions and specks of lime. Internal plain lead glaze brown with black iron speckles. 18th to 19th century. Similar to products of Holnest in north Dorset. For a discussion of the range of South Somerset fabrics produced in the Donyatt area see Coleman-Smith & Pearson 99-105. Context 201.

Verwood wares. Hard-fired buff oxidised laminar matrix with iron rich inclusions showing as reddish black speckles in the plain internal lead glaze which fires yellow-brown in colour. Typical of the products of the potteries at Verwood dating from the 18th to mid 20th century (see Draper 2002). Contexts 101, 201, 301.

The pottery by context

Context (101)

Two sherds, both post-medieval earthenwares.

Sherd 1; form is probably a thrown bowl or small pancheon; typical of the products of the potteries at Verwood dating from the 18th to mid 20th century (see Draper 2002).

Sherd 2; fragment of roof-tile; moderately fired buff oxidised matrix of poorly mixed clays with a few iron-rich inclusions; rolled out on a sanded bed. Likely to be a local hand-made product but impossible to pin down to a specific date within the post-medieval period.

Context (104)

Sherd; hand-made; probably a jar form, 11th to 12th century. Fabric HPV02.

Context (105) Four medieval sherds of different fabric types.

Sherd 1; rim sherd; hand-made. The everted rim is typical of 11th to 12th century jar forms.

Fabric HPV02

Sherd 2; hard-fired reduced dark grey and reoxidised light to reddish buff laminar fabric whose main inclusions have been either entirely burnt out or more likely leached out leaving a corky appearance with few iron-rich fragments; hand-made; probably a jar form, 11th to 12th century. Fabric unclassified.

Sherd 3; hand-made; probably a jar form, 11th to 12th century. Fabric HPV03.

Sherd 4; hand-made; probably a jar form, 11th to 12th century. Fabric HPV03.

Context (201)

Two post-medieval sherds of two different fabrics.

Sherd 1; wheel-thrown bowl, probably South Somerset made but could also be from Holnest in North Dorset whose wares have yet to be characterised. 18th to 19th century.

Sherd 2: the form is probably a bowl or small pancheon; typical of the products of the potteries at Verwood dating from the 18th to mid 20th century (see Draper 2002).

Context (301)

Single sherd; the wheel thrown form is probably a pancheon. Typical of the products of the potteries at Verwood dating from the 18th to mid 20th century (see Draper 2002).

Context (304)

Three medieval sherds of different fabric types.

Sherd 1; similar to sherd 4 from context (105); hand-made; probably an incised-decorated jar form, 11th to 12th century. Fabric HPV02.

Sherd 2; hand-made; probably a jar form, 11th to 12th century. Fabric HPV03.

Sherd 3; hand-made probably locally from the white firing clays; probably a jar form, 11th to 13th century. Fabric HPV02.

Context (404)

Single sherd; hand-made; probably a jar form, 11th to 12th century. Fabric HPV02

Context (2000)

Probably prehistoric

Three body sherds (2000/1, 2000/2, 2000/3), 9mm thick, with a very soft fired reduced poorly mixed laminar matrix, reoxidised buff on surfaces, abundant inclusions have entirely burnt away leaving a very corky texture (fabric type HFVPI). Fabric similar to Bronze Age material from Mendip compare Wookey Hole.

11th to 12th century

Two adjoining body sherds (2000/5, 2000/10) of fabric type HVF02, reduced grey core and reoxidised buff inner surface and dark buff to grey external surface; hand-made; probably a jar form.

Two body sherds (2000/7, 2000/8) and a small fragment of rim (2000/5) of fabric type HVF02; hand-made; probably jar forms.

Rim (2000/9) of hard-fired fabric similar to HVF02 except with more abundant quartz. Rim of a curfew decorated with an applied thumbled strip above the flat rim,

12th to 13th century

Body sherd (2000/4) of fabric type HVF04 (see 2003/1), reduced and reoxidised, burnt-off plain green lead glaze on exterior over two combed lines; hand-made; probably a tripod pitcher form.

Context (2003)

Fabric type HVF02

Sherds 2, 3 & 4 are from the same vessel, 3 & 4 join. Sherds from the basal carination in a hard-fired reduced dark grey micaceous matrix, reoxidised to dark buff; hand-made. The base of a jar form of 11th to 12th century.

Sherds 16 to 20 body sherds are hard-fired reduced dark grey micaceous matrix, reoxidised to dark buff on patches of the outer surface; smoothed external surface; hand-made. Jar forms of 11th to 12th century. Possibly local Upper Greensand derived wares.

Fabric type HVF03

Sherds 10 to 15 share the same fabric type.

All six are body sherds fairly soft-fired with a smooth micaceous matrix with a reduced grey core and occasional light grey to buff reoxidised surface; apparently hand-made. Jar forms of 11th to 12th century.

Fabric type HVF04

Sherd 1. Rim sherd of hard-fired reduced buff-grey matrix with abundant inclusions all less than 1mm of oolitic limestone and occasional fossil shell which feels very gritty. Some either leached out or lost through physical abrasion leaving some pitting of the surfaces. Everted

rim with rounded edge and raised collar decorated with a band of oblique stab marks and below a wavy band incised with a four-toothed comb. Hand-made; probably the rim of an unglazed tripod pitcher. Similar to wares identified to Minety in Wiltshire. 12th to 13th century.

Sherd 5 is part of the basal carination of a hard-fired, hand-made vessel; probably the base of a tripod pitcher. 12th to 13th century.

Sherd 6 is a body sherd; part preserves a thin external plain lead glaze reduced green in colour; hand-made; probably part of a tripod pitcher. 12th to 13th century.

Fabric type HVF05

Sherds 7, 8 & 9 share the same fabric type.

All three are body sherds medium- to hard-fired with a fine grainy matrix with a reduced grey core and reoxidised orange-red surfaces with irregular patches of reduction, rather abraded gritty feel. Sherd 8 is decorated with two incised lines: sherd 9 with three preserving traces of a plain lead glaze; apparently hand-made.; probably parts of tripod pitcher form. 12th to 13th century.

Context (2004)

12th to 13th century

Two adjoining body sherds (2004/1, 2004/2) of fabric type HVF04 reduced grey core and reoxidised orange surfaces with burnt-off external plain green lead over two combed lines; probably tripod pitcher form.

Context (2020)

Probably 11th to 12th century

Small body fragment (2020/1) of fabric type HVF02. Too small to assess form.

Context (2030)

Probably 11th to 12th century

Thirty-nine sherds mostly base but with three (two adjoining) sherds of the basal carination of two different vessels. All of fabric type HVF02 (see 2003/2) and probably representing just two vessels – both open jar forms.

Context (2034)

11th to 12th century

One body sherd (2034/1) of fabric type HVF02 with one reoxidised surface. Too small to assess form.

Five adjoining body sherds (2034/2, 2034/3, 2034/4, 2034/5, 2034/6) and three fragments (2034/7, 2034/8, 2034/9) all from the base of the same vessel of fabric type HVF03 (see 2003/10) with reduced grey exterior and reoxidised orange interior; hand-made; probably a jar form.

Context (3040)

Probably Iron Age

Two adjoining sherds (3040/1, 3040/2), very corky and soft-fired. Fabric HVFP2. Simple square-cut upright rim of a jar decorated with impressed stabs underneath the edge of the rim.

Two fragments of fired clay

Context (3100)

Rim (3100/1), square-cut with impressed finger-nail decoration across the top of the rim; form possibly a storage jar; fabric HVF01 similar to Ilchester B ware which Pearson dates to the 11th to 12th century (Pearson 171),

Context (3106)

Six small sherds of fabric HVF01 similar to 3100/1.

Conclusion

The nearest extensive published excavated sequences are from Ilchester, 13 miles to the west. Apart from fabric HVF01 which is similar to Ilchester B ware, there is no correlation between fabric types. This may be an indication that the other four medieval fabrics are very localised in the use. Future comparison with the medieval fabric types from the Wincanton by-pass would be desirable when these finds are available for study (Ellison & Pearson 212-216). For a discussion of Upper Greensand derived wares from the Blackdowns see Allan *et al* 2011.

Bibliography

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