

Update June 2014: Mediaeval Pottery Finds

We have been consulting on the pottery finds from this site, and I am especially grateful to Chris Cumberpatch for looking at our assemblage.



Part of the mediaeval assemblage

Chris has provided the following comments:

“The pottery sherds from excavations in Wirksworth were examined by the author on 5th and 6th June 2014 with a view to providing identifications and dates to assist in future work on the site.

The problems of dating local medieval wares in Derbyshire were summarised by the author in 2004 (Cumberpatch 2004a) and in the subsequent ten years little has changed to alter the picture. Locally made wares, even those which achieved a regional distribution (Brackenfield and Burley Hill), remain poorly dated and in some cases poorly defined. The lack of publication of significant assemblages from Derby, Nottingham and Chesterfield is largely responsible for this state of affairs. In the case of Burley Hill and Brackenfield, two of the sites that have been published, dating evidence was limited and only broad date ranges have been assigned to the wares; these are quoted in the data tables and fill discussions can be found in the articles listed below. One unexpected observation was the presence of a sherd, apparently of Doncaster Frenchgate type (sherd H). This type of pottery, hand-made and relatively crude compared with later Doncaster products, seems to have been associated with the construction and use of the post-Conquest timber castle on the site of the Roman fort and is believed to date to the late 11th or early 12th century. Its presence in Wirksworth is unexpected to say the least, given its rarity even within Doncaster itself.”

The mediaeval pottery is quite wide ranging, this might tend to support the view that Wirksworth (as an important mediaeval town) could attract trade and goods from a wide area, based on the prosperity of its lead industry.



Mediaeval pottery sherd from context 108

The kinds of pottery from the section trench (contexts 108 and 109) and test pit 4 (109) include items from the kilns at Brackenfield near Shirland, about halfway between Wirksworth and Chesterfield; also from Burley Hill near Duffield, between Wirksworth and Derby; from kilns at Doncaster Frenchgate, and from a range of other sites. These items cover a date range from the 11th to 15th centuries, and are in addition to some shards from test pit 1, including “Coal Measures” types from Rawmarsh by Rotherham, also known as South Yorkshire Gritty Ware with a date range of 12th and 13th centuries.

Other pottery is being separately evaluated, and will be dealt with in later reports.

Bibliography

Cumberpatch, C.G. 2002 - 2003 Medieval pottery from manufacturing sites at King Street, Duffield and Burley Hill Duffield, Derbyshire: a summary report *Medieval Ceramics* 26/7; 85-100

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http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/ceramics_eh_2003/

Cumberpatch, C.G. & Sydes, R.E. 2004 A pottery assemblage from an early medieval kiln at Frenchgate, Doncaster
http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/ceramics_eh_2003/downloads.cfm?archive=Frenchgate