



ASTLEY HALL, CHORLEY, Lancashire

Finds Report from the 2002 Excavation



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1. THE FINDS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 A total of 94 fragments of artefacts was recovered from the 2002 excavation. Approximately 50% of the assemblage was represented by pottery, the remainder comprising ceramic building material, iron, clay pipe, animal bone, and fragments of stone, coal and fuel ash. For the most part, the finds were in a fair condition, although many fragments were clearly quite abraded, having been recovered from essentially disturbed deposits. The material was collected from cleaning layers, ditch and pit fills, and spoil heaps. Several sherds of medieval pottery were present, but the majority of the finds derived from the 18th and 19th centuries.

1.2 THE POTTERY

1.2.1 The pottery assemblage was recovered from a total of four contexts (**108**, **120**, **111** and **118**), and consisted of 45 sherds, of which 11 were of medieval origin. The remainder of the pottery assemblage dated to the 18th century (four sherds) and the 19th century (25 sherds). Some of the earlier material is abraded, and many of the later sherds also show some surface erosion. Analysis of the pottery was based solely on visual inspection of individual sherds, and has been described using the terminology developed by Orton *et al* (1993). In general terms, the material was in poor condition, and most fragments were clearly abraded and rolled. The date ranges suggested for these fabrics are approximate, and are based on parallels from previous excavations at Astley Hall in 1998 and 1999 (Lancaster University Archaeology Unit 1998 and 2001).

1.2.2 **Medieval period:** the earliest material produced from the excavation was nine sherds of a coarse, sandy fabric retrieved from layer **108** and pit fill **120**. This fabric occurred in the 1998 excavations, and was believed to have been manufactured locally from the twelfth century until the early thirteenth century. Seven sherds resembling Partially Reduced Grey ware were recovered from layer **108** and ditch fill **111**, these fabric types may be ascribed a 13th or 14th century date. The absence of rims or other diagnostic sherds, however, has precluded the confident identification of vessel forms.

1.2.3 The likely sources of pottery used in Lancashire during the medieval period are as yet not well known, and the fabrics present in the Astley Hall assemblage cannot be ascribed to a specific origin. The single sherd from layer **108** resembled a fabric generated by the Northern Gritty tradition common to the north-west of England. However, it is likely, the pottery is the product of a local source.

1.2.4 **Post-medieval period:** the 29 sherds of 18th and 19th century pottery retrieved from the evaluation were produced from layer **108**, ditch fill **111**, and pit fill **120**. The medieval pottery came from the same contexts (*Section 1.2.2*).

- 1.2.5 The 18th century material comprises several body fragments of mottled or manganese speckled ware vessel; a buff-bodied earthenware covered with a streaked mottled brown lead glaze. A single fragment of lathe-turned white salt-glazed earthenware is also likely to be of an 18th century date, whilst the remainder of the group comprises an undecorated white tin-glazed earthenware plate.
- 1.2.6 The group comprised kitchen and table wares likely to have been manufactured in Lancashire at Prescott, or Rainford, which flourished as a production centre throughout the eighteenth century (Davey 1987). Tin-glazed earthenware production flourished during the 18th century throughout England. Liverpool alone had 14 centres producing Delft ware, other centres included Bristol, Lancaster and London (Black 2001).
- 1.2.7 The 19th century group largely comprises plain terracotta flower pots from the Victorian era. Table wares consist of white-glazed earthenware paste pots and plates, English porcelain, blue feather-edged Pearlware plate, purple and blue transfer-printed wares, and a single fragment of refined yellow ware dish. The remainder of the group from this period are made up of utilitarian dark glazed red earthenware storage jars
- 1.2.8 The range and quality of the tableware forms are indicative of the Staffordshire pottery industry and are likely to have originated from that region, whilst the earthenwares were probably produced locally.

1.3 OTHER FINDS

- 1.3.1 Apart from the pottery discussed, there was little of interest amongst the other finds. Material classes not discussed in this report such as 20th century metalwork can be referred to the finds catalogue.
- 1.3.2 The ceramic building material included small fragments of brick and roof tile, with few diagnostic finished edges. The fragments add little to the interpretation of the site.
- 1.3.3 There were three clay tobacco pipe stem fragments broadly dated from the late 17th to 19th century, a bowl fragment from dumped horizon *118* had rouletted decoration for which an 18th century date can be ascribed (Oswald 1975).

1.4 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the small finds assemblage is of limited archaeological significance, although it does provide a 19th century date for certain features exposed during the excavation. In all probability, the finds represent the dumping of domestic refuse and suggest an occupation of the surrounding area since the late 12th century. However, the lack of material dating later than the 18th century has potential interest, suggesting other areas of the estate was used to dispense waste, or the area of the site was abandoned during this period.

2. FINDS CATALOGUE

Object No	Context	Count	Material	Description	Date
1000	<i>U/s</i>	1	Ceramic	Salt-glazed earthenware	18th/19th century
1000	<i>U/s</i>	2	Ceramic	Flower pot	19th century
1000	<i>U/s</i>	3	Ceramic	Building materials	Not dated
1000	<i>U/s</i>	2	Stone	Burnt lumps	Not dated
1000	<i>U/s</i>	8	Iron	Drain pipe brackets	20th century
1001	<i>108</i>	9	Ceramic	White earthenware paste pot, Tin-Glazed earthenware, White-Glazed earthenware, Pearlware, Transfer-Printed ware	18th/19th century
1001	<i>108</i>	3	Ceramic	Mottled ware	18th century
1001	<i>108</i>	3	Ceramic	Flower pot	19th century
1001	<i>108</i>	1	Ceramic	Staffordshire Yellow ware	19th century
1001	<i>108</i>	5	Ceramic	Dark-glazed earthenware	19th century
1001	<i>108</i>	6	Ceramic	Sandy wares	12th/13th century
1001	<i>108</i>	5	Ceramic	Partially-Reduced Grey wares	13th/14th century
1001	<i>108</i>	20	Ceramic	Building materials	Not dated
1001	<i>108</i>	2	Ceramic	Clay tobacco pipe stems	17th/19th century
1001	<i>108</i>	2	Glass	Wine bottle, window glass	19th/20th century
1001	<i>108</i>	1	Animal Bone	Sheep	Not dated
1001	<i>108</i>	2	Flint	Unworked nodules	Not dated
1002	<i>111</i>	1	Ceramic	English Porcelain	19th century
1002	<i>111</i>	2	Ceramic	Partially reduced ware	13th/14th century

1002	111	1	Ceramic	Dark glazed red earthenware	18th/19th century
1002	111	1	Iron	Drain pipe	Not dated
1003	118	2	Charcoal		Not dated
1003	118	1	Iron	Tool handle	18th century
1003	118	1	Ceramic	Clay pipe decorated bowl	18th century
1003	118	1	Ceramic	Building material, tile	19th century
1004	120	2	Ceramic	Dark glazed red earthenware	18th/19th century
1004	120	3	Ceramic	Local medieval sandy ware	12th/13th century
1005	124	1	Ceramic	Dark glazed red earthenware	18th/19th century
1005	124	3	Ceramic	Building material, tile	18th/19th century

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