

Courtesy of John Firth, Tadcaster Historical Society

DAY 18 - MONDAY 27 APRIL

All of the digging is finished and today was a day of tidying up. The mechanical digger arrived on site about 8:30 and worked its methodical way around the site filling in the holes. All the man hours spent unearthing our small treasures swept away in just a few minutes per hole.

The fence was taken down and loaded onto the truck in Church Yard. The site was levelled and was more or less back to how it was when we started by 11:30. The borrowed tools were loaded into the van and the "archive" loaded into our car. This archive stays with Tadcaster Historical Society for the time being and it will be washed and catalogued over the next few weeks – volunteers still gratefully accepted!

As soon as we can, we will arrange an exhibition with some of the best finds on show for the Town to see, together with an explanation of what we have discovered about the site. This will be publicised in advance.

So all that remains is to say a big "Thank You" to various people:

- The Heritage Lottery Fund, Tadcaster Town Council and the Tadcaster and Villages Community Engagement Forum for sponsoring the dig, and those who helped us secure the funding and all the required permissions;
- Archaeological Services West Yorkshire Archive Service (ASWYAS) for the supervision, training, expertise and encouragement they provided – especially Dave Williams supported by Rosie, Zoe, Marina, Kev, Jane & Family, Chris and Phil;
- The Boy's Sunday School Trustees for the comfort facilities and safe overnight storage;
- The Saturday Coffee Morning Teams for the bacon sandwich service;
- Greg Lodge and Wendy Binns for their help with press and publicity and Peter Bradshaw for the use of the Visual Archive pictures of the cottages and his window display in Kirkgate;
- The army of willing volunteers that has toiled away digging, sifting and collecting artefacts making it such a happy experience and without whom the dig would never have been possible;
- The energetic groups of teenagers from Tadcaster Grammar School who joined us on two Thursdays and the two groups from Riverside Primary School who came to find out what we were doing;
- All of the people who have provided memories including pictures and paintings of the cottages and life beside the river;
- All the passers-by who have stopped to chat and find out what is going on;
- And lastly, whoever it was who arranged 18 days of wonderful weather!

DAY 17 - SUNDAY 26 APRIL

Work commenced at around 09:00 today. It was sunny and warmer than expected after scraping ice off the car windscreen this morning. There were a total of 17 volunteers today.

Work continued on TP9, Trench 1, Trench 2A and Trench 2B.

TP1 to TP8, and TP10 were not worked today.

TP9 was worked by some young recruits and much fun was had. No further objects were found.

Trench 1 The pit within the cottage was deepened and some of the tumble of stone on the motte side was removed. Some enormous animal bones were found – a rib and a major joint.

Trench 2A in the passage, more of the earthenware sewer pipe was uncovered towards the rear of the cottage. The part exposed yesterday appeared to point towards the old Grammar School which would have meant that it would pass under the cottage and would have had to predate the cottage. The newly exposed part showed the pipe to bend so that it ran alongside the cottage.

There was a small amount of digging in the bottom of the end nearest the Church with a number of bones and pottery being found.

Trench 2B It was apparent that the newly discovered 12" earthenware pipe was heading for the manhole. The manhole was excavated to discover more about this pipe. A lot of rubble was removed down to the base of the manhole but it produced another mystery. A pipe was removed down to the base of the manhole but it produced another mystery. A pipe entered it from the North and one left from the East heading for the river. However, there was no sign of the pipe arriving from the West (cottage passage). The pipe from the North appeared to come from the drain in TP4. The drain in TP4 went vertically down and joined a North-South pipe of a large diameter pipe similar to the one arriving in the manhole.

It was finally decided that the manhole intercepted the newly found West-East pipe which was already defunct. The newly laid North-South pipe was thus able to use the old pipe as a way of reaching the river without having to dig a new trench. The West-East pipe had been cut before reaching the manhole, and pieces of broken pipe found tended to confirm this.

The finds from the manhole included small pieces of glazed pottery, a light round ball (possibly from a baby's rattle), and not much else.

The centre of the trench was deepened a little and gave us today's star find – an early clay pipe bowl still attached to part of the stem and still with its spur. What a lovely way to end the Dig.

So, the digging has now finished. The finds have been bagged and now the analysis begins. Tomorrow, the digger arrives to fill in all the holes we have laboriously dug and the fence will be removed.

DAY 16 - SATURDAY 25 APRIL

Work commenced at around 09:00 today. It was overcast with sunny spells and a few drops of rain until we were packing-up when some more serious rain started. There were a total of 14 volunteers today.

A correction from yesterday – the inscription on the glass seal should have read “PYRMONT Wr I H REISENER & H EYRE” (See: D. Burton (2015), *Antique Sealed Bottles 1640 - 1900*, and the families who owned them. Vol III, and W. Van den Bossche (2001), *Antique Glass Bottles: Their history and evolution (1500 – 1850)*).

Work continued on TP8, TP9, Trench 1, Trench 2A and Trench 2B.

TP1 to TP7 and TP10 were not worked today.

TP8 was deepened this afternoon. There appear to be distinct layers within the test pit with shallow stony/pebbly layers, interspersed with soil and clay. The finds include some animal bone, a clay pipe stem and some glazed pottery.

TP9 was deepened this afternoon but only coal was recovered – a feature of the whole site.

Trench 1 The pit within the cottage was deepened. The side towards the motte is made up of a similar tumble of large stones to those found in the pit outside the cottage. On the river side of the hole, the material removed resembles sand and crushed or rotten limestone. This is very different to the soil in the pit outside the cottage. Today's finds include an oyster shell, more bones, a part brick from amongst the large stones and a chunky piece of unglazed pottery rim with a cross-hatched design on the outside.

Trench 2A has seen the culvert in the red room deepened. No distinct bottom to the culvert has been revealed. It just gets wetter, more compacted and harder to dig. The finds include animal bone, some terracotta pot glazed black on the inside, a dip-pen nib, some white glazed pottery fragments and a piece of plaster painted cobalt blue – could this explain the blue substance found yesterday? The floor of the red room was cleared of a lot of cindery deposit to reveal some large stones which appear to be tumbled rather than organised.

In the passage, more of the culvert was investigated with a most surprising find in the bottom – a 12” earthenware sewer pipe going from the passage out under the doorstep heading for the manhole. More investigation is needed to find the car park end of this pipe but it appears to point towards the old Grammar School. The mystery is how this apparently modern looking pipe is below the cottages. The finds include some animal bone and some possibly medieval pottery, but the presence of the pipe suggests that there has been disturbance in this area.

A small amount of digging in the bottom of the end nearest the Church found some pottery and exposed another course of stone below yesterday's level. More digging is needed to see what else this hole can tell us.

Trench 2B has had the “wall” removed between two worked areas in the middle of the trench. The finds include more animal bone, a decorated clay pipe stem, some glazed pot and a piece of glazed pot with a mottled design. At the river end of the trench, the hole has become too deep to be worked any further. The auger was used in the deepest part and has brought up soil with a more sandy consistency. The depth reached by the auger is estimated to be about 2m above riverbed. There were no finds today from this part of the trench.

Tomorrow is the last day of digging and there are several mysteries remaining to be solved.

DAY 15 - FRIDAY 24 APRIL

Work commenced at around 09:00 today. It was sunny and warm all day, clouding a little towards packing-up time. There were a total of 14 volunteers today with about 11 on site at any time.

The day started with an explanation of the seal found in TP1 on Day 3. The glass seal had been attached to a half a quart glass bottle. The bottle and seal were made in Belgium or Holland between 1720 and 1740. The bottle was then sent to Pyrmont in Germany to be filled with spa water. This bottle was then exported to Britain and ended up in Tadcaster. So, shipping mineral water around Europe is nothing new. The seal is inscribed with “W. REISEN.R & H.EYRE PYRMONT”.

Work continued on Trench 1, Trench 2A and Trench 2B.

TP1 to TP10 were not worked today.

Trench 1 was dug both inside and outside the cottage wall. Inside the cottage, the hole was deepened. The side towards the river is made up of soil with some small stones below and contained only animal bone. On the other side of the area there are much larger stones below the soil layer and these are similar in arrangement to those found in the area outside the cottage.

Outside the cottage, the trench was declared deep enough this morning. The area was squared off by removing some large stones at the motte side. Finds include part of the rim of a pot that is post-Roman or medieval. Then a piece of blue and white glazed pottery was found probably in disturbed ground around the sewer pipe which is visible at the southern end of this excavation.

Trench 2A has had the floor level cleared in part of the red room. This exposed some stone flags in the corner near the “passage”. It quickly became clear that there was a large void under these flags. One was removed and a stone lined culvert was uncovered. The culvert passes under the cottage across the corner to enter the “passage” under the bricked-up doorstep. Investigation of the passage found evidence of the culvert under the passage although it has been robbed out and filled in in places. The culvert was traced into Trench 2B on the Church side of the “manhole”. There was a mouse or vole living in the rubble on the car park side of the red room wall which occasionally visited the culvert whilst digging

proceeded and didn't seem at all bothered about our presence. Finds from the red room include glass, glazed pot, animal bone and teeth and a "cobalt blue" substance which has been suggested could be a wax crayon residue washed down the culvert from the old Grammar School. The finds from the passage were very similar.

At the Church end of the trench, the hole in the floor started yesterday was deepened. By the end of the day the outer wall was found to have a considerable depth of stone wall below floor level. Some of these walls were in a different alignment to the cottage above and include what looks like a doorstep about 3 feet below cottage floor level. This could be an earlier cottage. Finds include glazed pottery and a thicker pipe stem. There is also some mortar showing burning on one face.

Trench 2B has been cleared to expose more of the culvert down the side of the manhole. In the centre of the trench, the "wall" between two worked areas is being reduced in height. A few pieces of bone and glazed pot were found. At the river end the trench gets ever deeper. The soil has become more stony but no clear ditch or base layer has yet been found. The finds today include bone, Roman domestic pottery and medieval glazed pottery.

DAY 14 - THURSDAY 23 APRIL

Work commenced at around 09:00 today. It was foggy this morning and quite cool but sunny and warm this afternoon. There was a maximum of 12 volunteers today but we had visits from two groups of 24 children from Riverside Primary School in Tadcaster, and 12 active teenagers from Tadcaster Grammar School.

Work continued on TP6, TP7, TP8, TP9, TP10, Trench 1, Trench 2A and Trench 2B.

TP1, TP2, TP3, TP4, and TP5 were not worked today.

TP6 was worked today with a very large pot base being gently teased out of the side wall. This was earthenware and part glazed. It was recovered with only a small piece breaking off – what an achievement.

TP7 had the auger applied to the bottom in more places.

TP8 was deepened through a shallow stony layer. The finds today have been of teeth and animal bone.

TP9 was deepened with the "step" removed but very little was added to the finds tray.

TP10 was recorded.

Trench 1 was dug both inside and outside the cottage wall. Inside the cottage, the step along the north side was removed and the area was deepened. The finds today have been of teeth and animal bones.

Outside the cottage, the trench was deepened, with few more finds. After lunch, the river side of the trench was squared off ready for recording but this produced probably the best piece of Samian Ware found on the site. It is a fairly large shard covering from the rim

through a pattern down the side of a bowl. Also recovered was a flat piece of bone which appears to show butchery marks.

Trench 2A has been cleared to floor level. The passageway between the two cottages has been cleared further to expose more of the foundations of the cottage nearest the Church. The finds here include a clay pipe bowl that has been dated to the 17th century, a few bones and some glazed pottery. At the Church end of the trench, a hole in the cottage concrete floor has been enlarged and some of the underlying rubble removed. An earth layer has been reached and the auger was used in the bottom of the hole. About 6" below the exposed earth, the auger hit something solid – so more digging is needed tomorrow.

Trench 2B has been cleared to expose more of the outside of the "manhole". The finds here include animal bone, glazed pot, a piece of chunky glass bowl and a piece of plain Samian Ware. The middle of the trench was deepened, digging through soil. A few animal bones were found along with a pipe stem with a spur. At the river end, the trench was deepened with finds including a large piece of Roman Grey Ware. Due to the depth of the trench, it was decided to step the side of the trench, which meant a lot of digging! There were various finds from the removed step but no "Victorian" pottery has been found.

DAY 13 - WEDNESDAY 23 APRIL

Today has been a rest day for supervisors and diggers, and what a lovely day it has been. Work starts again on Thursday at about 9:00. It will be a day of visits with two parties of Primary School children coming in the morning starting at 9:30 until 11:30. This is as well as the Grammar School party who came last Thursday under the supervision of Jon Palmer.

The weather forecast remains good until Sunday which is looking a bit wet – but that may change yet.

DAY 12 - TUESDAY 21 APRIL

Work commenced at around 09:00 today. It was sunny all day and very warm. There was a maximum of 14 volunteers today.

Work continued on TP8, TP9, TP10, Trench 1, Trench 2A and Trench 2B.

TP1, TP2, TP3, TP4, TP5, TP6, and TP7 were not worked today.

TP8 was deepened this morning with the digger (Charlie) retiring hurt with a bad back.

TP9 was deepened further but with very few finds. These included some bone and a piece of iron-work (but quite what is unknown).

TP10 was deepened to about 1m with hardly anything coming out of the lower deposits.

Trench 1 was dug both inside and outside the cottage wall. A layer of tumbled stone was found in each pit. Inside the house, the layer leading to these stones yielded various bones and a piece of Roman Samian Ware. Once the stones were removed, a few pieces of animal bone were found with one piece of dark grey pot of undetermined age.

Outside the cottage was a scattering of bone and, once the stones were removed, more bones and some pottery were found. This pottery includes some Roman, some medieval (15th or 16th Century glazed in green and brown) and a rim of a pot that could be pre-Roman, Roman or immediately post-Roman. Absolutely no glazed "Victorian" pottery has been found.

Trench 2A was attacked again to remove the remaining debris. The floor level is beginning to emerge over the general area rather than in just a few places. The passageway between the two cottages has been cleared to expose the foundations of the cottage nearest the Church. Also, the area over the threshold in Trench 2B has been cleared to show the outside foundations of the cottages. Theories still abound about the order in which these cottages were built. About the only agreement reached is that they have been modified from the original build. The "manhole" outside the first cottage may actually have been an outside store or Privy at some stage in the life of the cottages. The gas pipe supplying gas for lighting, and perhaps cooking, runs alongside this "manhole" between it and the cottage fronts. Gas seems to have appeared in the town between 1828 and 1841.

Trench 2B was deepened, digging through soil. At the river end, the finds include some glazed pot and pipe stems. In the centre portion of the trench, finds include glazed pottery of various designs and colours, pipe stems, Roman Grey Ware and a green disk – possibly a coin or token that is difficult to read. On one side is a crown and "IV" and on the other what could be a Maltese cross or similar. The writing includes "PVBLICA" but there is more. The green colour could be due to copper. The finds also included two chunky pieces of medieval green/brown glazed pot – one glazed on one side, the other glazed on both sides.

Today, and yesterday, we have had an artist in residence, Rod Coope, who has been sketching various views of the site and trenches.

There is no digging on Wednesday 22nd – the Archaeologists and volunteers have a well-earned day off. The dig resumes on Thursday.

DAY 11 - MONDAY 20 APRIL

Work commenced at around 09:00 today. It was sunny most of the day, and warmer than yesterday. There was a maximum of 12 volunteers today.

Work continued on TP6, TP7, TP9, TP10, Trench 1 and Trench 2B.

TP1, TP2, TP3, TP4, TP5, TP8 and Trench 2A were not worked today.

TP6 was deepened to the surface found late yesterday. It was found that the surface, while different to what was above, was a very shallow pebbly layer. The trench was deepened further. The finds were few but a very nice piece of Roman Grey Ware in the form of the base of a pot or cup, was found.

TP7 was deepened to the level of the dog's skeleton. A lovely piece of glazed 17th century pottery was recovered. The auger was used to about the same depth again as the trench.

This showed that the type of soil does not change much, possibly showing that it is a depth of river deposits.

TP9 was deepened but with very few finds. These included some bone, some glass, a piece of grey pottery with a lovely design on it which could be Art Deco and another piece of glazed pot with a relief design.

TP10 was deepened and provided a sheep's skull, other bones, a pipe stem, some glass and some glazed pottery.

Trench 1 was dug outside the cottage wall. The finds included assorted rubble and roof tile, bone and glazed pottery. The dug portion was extended sideways to the cottage wall.

Trench 2B was trowelled back to clean the mystery surface for photographing and recording. This cleaning changed the look of the surface. The crushed limestone surface near the river was relatively level but then there was a diagonal harder, more rocky strip that looked far more like a wall. Beyond this the surface was dark brown soil. So the "Roman Road" had become the "Great Wall of Tadcaster". Once the recording was complete, the smoother surface and the wall were marked out and part of each was dug through. At the river end of the trench, the material removed appeared to be a soft sand/lime mix about 4" deep with an earthen surface below. The really wide wall turned out to be soft consolidated limestone forming a solid mass about 4" deep on an earthen surface and could never have taken the weight of a wall – so it must be a garden path or early riverside path. In digging into it, a clay pipe stem was found near the edge, so it is unlikely to be very old.

Part of the "garden" on the cottage side of the path was dug by about 4". This gave a few finds of bone, glazed pottery and glass. The star finds from this area were a piece of highly



decorated Samian Ware and a bronze, uneven shaped coin, thought to be Roman. So after the disappointment of the structures, at least we have a Roman coin!

Two of us had the privilege of being allowed to go up the church tower to photograph the site. One of their pictures is here.

DAY 10 - SUNDAY 19 APRIL

Work commenced at around 09:00 today. It was sunny but cool most of the day. There was a maximum of 14 volunteers (including young people) today.

Work continued on TP6, TP7, TP8 and Trench 2.

Trench 1, TP1, TP2, TP3, TP4, TP5, TP9 and TP10 were not worked today.

TP6 was deepened with only a few animal bone finds. However, just as we started to pack up, a surface similar to, or rather more solid than that in Trench 2B was found. This surface was about 0.8 metres below ground level.

TP7 was the place to go for canine exhumation today. The bones of the dog were carefully lifted and bagged. The dog breed is unknown but it could be the size of a lurcher or similar. It is likely that it has been buried for at least 100 years.

TP8 was deepened this afternoon and the first piece of Roman Grey Ware was recovered from it. Then, as we were packing up, another surface similar to that in TP6 started to emerge.

Trench 2A northern end was again attacked to remove more rubble. The floor surface of the second cottage from the Church has now been uncovered and does appear to have been robbed out. It was probably a flagged stone floor since pieces of mortar, which look to have been between the flags and by the wall, have been found. The floor level and the apparent door step down from the cottage nearest the Church are still causing discussion about which cottage was built first and whether it is one cottage or two. Further investigation on the outside of the cottages (just in the end of Trench 2B) has shown that the stone foundations of the cottage go down quite a long way and appear to have been laid at the same time. Work is proceeding on the bay window side of the doorway to compare the foundations under the cottage nearest to the Church. Finds include some glazed pottery, a clay pipe stem and a glass bottle neck.

Trench 2B was deepened slightly to give a continuous floor at the level of the compressed limestone surface at the river end of the trench. The level is now continuous to the "crazy paving" doorstep. Discussions are still ongoing about whether this abuts a garden path or an earlier cottage. Comparing the level and alignment of the "path" with that of the "garden path" found in TP4 shows that it is probably the same surface. Finds include various bits of pottery and earthenware.

The intention is now to trowel the complete surface and to photograph it carefully. It can then be sectioned to determine whether the material has enough depth for a road or whether it is something else.

DAY 9 - SATURDAY 18 APRIL

Work commenced at around 09:00 today. It was warm and sunny most of the day. There were 28 volunteers (including young people) this morning falling to 19 this afternoon. The Church Coffee Morning Team provided bacon sandwiches, freshly made to order.

Work continued on TP7, Trench 1 and Trench 2. Four new Test Pits (TP6, TP8, TP9 and TP10) were opened. These are marked on the attached site plan.

TP1, TP2, TP3, TP4 and TP5 were not worked today, although TP2 was recorded during the day.

TP6 was opened today. After breaking through the layer of plants and roots, a solid layer of discarded roof tiles was uncovered. Once these were removed, the trench became predominantly soil and root. The finds included some colourful pottery, animal bone, and a clay pipe stem.

TP7 deepened further along its 2m length. A lot of varied pottery shards were recovered along with most of a plain clay pipe bowl and some animal bone. This afternoon, a complete dog skeleton was uncovered and a start was made on carefully removing it. Four pieces of Roman Grey Ware were found.

TP8 was opened today. So far, this pit was mainly soil and root but the finds included some animal bone and a tooth, some pieces of glazed pottery in different colours and some glass including a bottle neck and some chunky glass from a vase or tumbler that has a pearlescent outer surface.

TP9 was opened today and soon had to move slightly south due to tree roots. Again it comprises the fine, almost stoneless soil of the other pits. The finds include some willow pattern pottery, other colourful pottery, animal bone and a clay pipe stem with part of the bowl attached. Late in the afternoon, a stone was uncovered – this could have been a building stone or a cobble but was the first in this pit.

TP10 was opened today. Again this was soil and root with a few small stones (pebble sized). The finds include some metal strip, various small pieces of glazed pottery and earthenware and some decorated clay pipe stem.

Trench 1 was worked at the south end only today. The area under the concrete floor consists of further surfaces of beaten earth containing various animal bone and teeth and a few pieces of cream pottery. The bone/teeth were identified as coming from horse, cattle, pig and sheep and all could be close to 200 years old.

Outside the cottage, the ground contains a lot of tumbled stone. The finds include a sheep bone, a cat's tooth and chunky piece of Roman Grey Ware.

Trench 2A was mostly cleared of rubble at the northern end and a sharply edged, thick piece of slate was uncovered along the party wall. This has the appearance of a door step, with the wall at either end plastered. This seems to suggest a way through from the most southerly cottage to the next one. The floor of this cottage is quite a bit lower than the concrete floor of the most southerly cottage. It is not clear where the division between the two cottages is. The floor of the room being uncovered seems to have been robbed out.

Trench 2B was cleared of rubble at the end nearer to Trench 2A and the manhole. This revealed a doorstep and stony garden path abutting what could be the front wall of a cottage of an earlier time than the main set of cottages. This earlier cottage is on a different alignment, with its front door looking more towards the town road bridge.

The rest of the trench was deepened to the level of the crushed limestone surface found yesterday revealing about 5 square metres of almost level surface. This surface does not stretch beyond about halfway along the trench. Whether this is because of disturbance due to the cottage building process is not clear yet. So this surface has not yet been explained and theories other than it being a road are being considered. So yesterday's cliff hanger continues.....

The finds from Trench 2B include several clay pipe bowls, pottery in all shapes and colours and some glass.

DAY 8 - FRIDAY 17 APRIL

Work commenced at around 09:00 today. It was warm in the sunshine today but chilly during the few cloudy periods. There were about 14 volunteers during the day.

Work continued on three of the six test pits (TP1, TP5 and TP7), Trench 1 and Trench 2. These are the Test Pits and Trench marked TP1-5, TP7, Trench 1, Trench 2A and Trench 2B on the site plan.

TP1 has been deepened still further with more loose stones being removed. Two pieces of Samian Ware and part of an oyster shell were found this morning but there were hardly any finds during the afternoon until the last trowelful brought out some Roman Grey Ware pottery.

TP2, TP3 and TP4 were not worked today.

TP5 was given the augur treatment today. The depth of soil under the bottom of the pit suggests that it may be in a ditch. A piece of medieval pot was recovered.

TP7 deepened quickly and gave up several animal bones, various bits of pottery, a fairly large piece of Denby vitreous pot and some Roman pottery. The decision was made in the afternoon to widen the test pit towards the Church. This entailed sawing through some old tree roots and some very large animal teeth were found.

Trench 1 was worked at the south end only today. More of the cottage concrete floor was removed and a start was made trowelling the layers below the floor. The earth area outside the cottage was deepened. This is made up of tumbled chunks of stone.

Trench 2A was cleaned and photographed to record the layout of the trench. The northern end of the trench has not been cleared of rubble as yet. A start was made digging through the floor under the "hall". This quickly uncovered what appeared to be concrete strip roughly heading towards the manhole outside the front of the cottage. The area between the "parlour" and the concrete strip was dug to expose the surprisingly solid wall between the "parlour" and "hall". The finds include some earthenware pot part glazed in black (Burmantoft ware?), the neck of a clear glass bottle and the first coin found on the site. It is clearly marked "GEORGIUS V DEI GRA BRITT OMN REX FID DEF IND IMP" so is clearly Roman – OK maybe it is a George V half penny dated 1920.

Trench 2B was deepened, at the river end, along and to the side of the garden path uncovered yesterday. The path is being preserved so that anyone coming on Saturday morning has a chance to see it. The finds gave a good mix of animal bone, bits of car, and pottery.

The great find of the morning was a complete clay pipe bowl (minus the stem). The bowl commemorates a boxing match, in fact the first international bare knuckle fight which took place on 17th April 1860 (what a coincidence!) at Farnborough between John Carmel Heenen, 25, (US) and “Brighton Titch” Tom Sayer, 34, (UK). The illegal fight was broken up by the police after more than 2 hours and the fighters escaped and shared the purse of £400. See



Photograph by Wendy Binns

<http://www.theguardian.com/sport/blog/2010/apr/14/john-heenan-tom-sayers-boxing>

Cliff-hanger. This afternoon, a crushed limestone surface was uncovered in the same area of Trench 2B. Could this be the Roman Road? It has the right appearance. Tomorrow more of the surface will be exposed and the composition below the surface investigated to determine if it really is the road.

DAY 7 - THURSDAY 16 APRIL

Work commenced at around 09:00 today. It was fairly overcast but not too cold or too warm. There were about 16 volunteers this morning with about 12 teenagers joining us for a couple of hours this afternoon. We were also visited by two photographers and Nigel Adams.

Work continued on three of the five test pits (TP1, TP3 and TP5), Trench 1 and Trench 2, with a new Test Pit (TP7) being opened. These are the Test Pits and Trench marked TP1-5, TP7, Trench 1, Trench 2A and Trench 2B on the site plan.

TP1 has been deepened with more loose stones being removed. Some more Roman Grey Ware pottery and some animal bones of various sizes were found.

TP2 and TP4 were not worked today.

TP3 was visited to use an augur in the bottom. This provided a sample of soil from deeper still. When this was washed it revealed a lot of fine gravel and a small piece of possibly Iron Age pottery.

TP5 was recorded today with drawings of the sides of the test pit being made.

TP7 has been opened nearer to the riverbank footpath. The digging was tough to start with because of the roots of nettles and trees but after a couple of inches there is a depth of lovely soil. Already there are several pieces of early 20th century pottery being collected in

a rainbow of colours, some bone, a small piece of clay pipe and what may be a metal bucket handle.

Trench 1 was worked at both ends again.

At the south (church) end, work started breaking through the softer concrete floor and the earth area outside the cottage was deepened a little. Some of the previous finds were carefully washed by the visiting school group. Under the floor, there is a depth of gritty material and four small hand-made bricks have been found. Could these have come from the brickworks on Wighill Lane?

At the north end, the two rooms in the more northern cottage were cleaned up exposing some unusual hexagonal quarry tiles underneath a thin concrete skim in the back room. Part of a thick terracotta roof tile has been uncovered which may be Roman, but the experts are not in agreement so we need an independent assessment.

Trench 2 was cut by the digger yesterday and was a mass of rubble this morning. It is being worked as two separate trenches separated by the manhole discovered yesterday. For convenience these two trenches will be referred to as Trench 2A (running roughly north/south approximately parallel to the car park wall) and Trench 2B (running towards the river).

Trench 2A was cleared of rubble to expose the concrete floor of the cottage nearest the Church. The end wall and front wall remain to about three courses of bricks and the bay window can be clearly seen. The front door lintel is still in place and the floor of the "hall", stone flagged but with some flags robbed out, is plain to see. A red-plastered internal wall has been exposed and the rubble is being cleared to find the floor level. This wall may be part of the first cottage or a room in the second cottage. It is not clear as yet. The finds have included a large rusty section of a car exhaust pipe, painted plaster in various colours and a lovely piece of "recent" pottery with a picture of a stage coach and a caption of "Dicken's Days".

Trench 2B was cleaned of rubble which exposed a garden path running diagonally across the trench. The path was bounded on both sides by broken roof tiles and the path was made up of bricks and parts of paving slabs. There was much debate about whether it was a path of the cottage era or whether it was laid later and was made from whatever came to hand among the demolition rubble.

In another area of the site, the excavator had accidentally removed whilst turning about ¼ inch of grass to reveal a brick path only just below the surface. This appears to be the path leading to the communal water pump. It seems odd that this path is so close to the surface when everywhere else seems to be covered by a depth of demolition debris.

DAY 6 - WEDNESDAY 15 APRIL

Today was a "digger's" rest day – but that doesn't mean that nothing happened. The mechanical digger and driver arrived about 8:30 this morning and spent the morning on site.



One task was to move some of the spoil heaps back from the edges of the trenches and test pits, particularly around the deeper north end of Trench 1.

Then Trench 2 was dug out. This is a “T-shaped” trench, 2 metres wide. The “top of the T” starts close to the path and runs North-West. This will be referred to as Trench 2A. The “leg of the T” (Trench 2B) starts close to the midpoint of the Trench 2A and runs North East. It is shown on the site map (below).

The ivy roots, nettles, bramble roots and some demolition debris were scraped away down to the level of the floor of the cottage nearest the Church. There appears to be a manhole in the Trench 2B just outside the cottage. This is rubble-filled and with a double brick wall. This will be evaluated tomorrow but may have to be avoided if there is a possibility of its collapsing.

This new trench will provide new work areas which will involve cleaning up and recording what has been exposed so far before digging downwards.

In view of the position of the new trench, the access “doorway” to the site for all “diggers” has now moved to the footpath nearer the river.

DAY 5 - TUESDAY 14 APRIL

Work commenced at around 09:00 today. It was fairly sunny and warmer than yesterday. There were about 14 volunteers today with about 10 on site at most times through the day.

Work continued on two of the five test pits and Trench 1. These are the Test Pits and Trench marked TP1 -5 and Trench 1 on the site plan.

TP1 has been deepened with more finds coming out from the test pit and the sieved earth removed from the pit. These included some more Roman Grey Ware pottery, some animal

bones of various sizes, a chunk of tile (grey interior with a thin orange coating on each face), and one and a half oyster shells. The tile could be part of an imbrex, the ridge covering the gap between adjacent flat tiles (or tegula). The indications are that we are into a Roman layer – except for the piece of medieval decorated pottery found this afternoon! So it is still a mixed layer.

TP2 was not worked today.

TP3 was not worked today.

TP4 was not worked today.

TP5 continues to deepen with several finds being washed today. These include various bones, a good set of teeth (animal of course!), a piece of roof tile, some decorated plaster, possibly a floor tile and some pottery of which two pieces may be medieval.

Trench 1 Further work was carried out at both ends of Trench 1, taking up most of today's effort.

At the south (church) end, the trench was lengthened by about 1 metre. This revealed an area of path outside the previously uncovered doorway. It also gave us a 1930s car starting handle, a steel pipe and a brown bottle base.

At the north end, the trench was widened for safety and lengthened marginally to try to explain the anomalies that yesterday's work revealed. Further material was dug out of the adjacent cottage to reveal more quarry tiles. More of the north-south wall was exposed, providing a possible explanation for the two parallel walls with a narrow gap between and the curved anomaly.

The newly exposed internal wall is surprisingly thick at about a foot. Yesterday's two parallel walls appear to be the bricking up of a doorway in this wall. One wall was built on the door sill (this being the timber that has now rotted away leaving a gap under the wall). The other wall is in line with the other edge of the thick wall. This gives both sides of the filled-in doorway a straight edge in line with the existing thick wall. The curved feature seen yesterday is the curved edge of the doorway in the thick wall. The explanation now seems simple, but with only half the story visible yesterday it did not seem to make sense.

Clearing the quarry tiles in the second cottage revealed a polished slate strip, apparently set into the tiled floor, with a second strip at right angles to it. It is not clear what this is at all. Other finds include a complete dark brown bottle, too small to be for beer. A clear bottle base, stamped with "Barnsley" was found along with a white glazed brick labelled "Gilmour & Co Kilmarnock". The latter was made between 1876 and 1940.

DAY 4 - MONDAY 13 APRIL

Work commenced at around 09:00 today. It was cool but fairly sunny. There were about 18 volunteers today with about 14 on site at most times through the day.

Work continued on four of the five test pits and Trench 1. These are the Test Pits and Trench marked TP1 -5 and Trench 1 on the site plan (shown below).

TP1 has had the stone rubble in the bottom recorded (drawn and height measurements taken). The rubble was then removed – the stones were not as large as they had looked. The soil below the stones was then trowelled and some more pieces of Roman Grey Ware were found before, very late in the day, a suspected brick turned into a fairly large piece of Roman Samian ware.

TP2 was extended by about half a metre to the south yesterday and this part of the test pit has been extended downwards. A large drain pipe was exposed which could be part of the outdoor water closet! The finds include a long, slightly curved tooth and a piece of pottery identified as part of a cheese press.

TP3 has been extended downwards in what seems to be deep garden soil. Finds include some Roman Grey Ware, some bone and teeth (animal), a piece of 19th Century pottery and part of a clay pipe.

TP4 is still available to view but may not be worked any further.

TP5 has been deepened by working through another layer of demolition rubble. There is evidence of burning and window glass on top of the rubble below the removed floor.

Trench 1 was worked in two separate areas today.

Where the painted floor was found earlier at the southern end of the trench (nearest the Church), the outside edge of the cottage was cleaned up ready for recording.

At the northern end, the brickwork around the fireplace that was found yesterday was cleaned up and the trench walls straightened up for safety.

In the next door cottage, behind the fireplace wall, the rubble has been cleared revealing a single brick wall running at right angles (north-south) to the party wall. This was supported on a piece of timber (painted green but mostly rotted away). To the east of this wall the floor is covered in quarry tiles with some patterned linoleum still covering parts of them. To the west of the wall is a mystery. There is a second wall almost parallel to the first wall about one foot from it. This seems to have been added to remove an alcove. The north-south wall ends about a metre to the north in a semi-circular object about a foot radius. The trench is likely to be extended by a few inches to try to discover what this can be.

DAY 3 - SUNDAY 12 APRIL

Work commenced at around 09:00 today. The threatened rain did not arrive until about 14:00 but there was a cool gusty wind all day. There were about 16 volunteers today with about 12 on site at most times through the day, even during the rain. Because of the threat of rain, the gazebo was raised first thing. This decided to take a stroll across the site as the wind got up. It was caught and restrained, until a strong gust collapsed it.

Work continued on the five test pits and Trench 1. These are the Test Pits marked TP1 -5 on the attached plan. This is traced from the 1893 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map. Some measurements were taken to enable the positions of the test pits and trench to be marked on the site map.

TP1 continued to deepen and some more Roman pottery was found. A fairly large piece of Grey Ware and some small pieces of orange/terracotta Samian Ware were found. This pit also took the site back a further 1000 years when a Neolithic flint was found. By the end of the day some large stones had been uncovered which look like stone demolition rubble from an earlier building, but this has not been dated at this stage. This building appears to pre-date the cottages and was in position either after the motte was cut away or before the motte was built.

TP2 has been extended by about half a metre to the south. New finds include another coat hook but the digging is tough so more may be found when the trench gets a bit deeper.

TP3 has been extended downwards a bit further, but not much time was spent on this test pit today.

TP4 was carefully recorded today and no more work is intended in this test pit as the existence of the drain probably indicates that the ground has been disturbed.

TP5 has been deepened with the removal of the flooring recorded yesterday. Under the floor there seems to be more demolition rubble.

Trench 1 was worked in three separate areas today. Where the painted floor was found yesterday, the floor was cleaned up and the trench sides squared off. Debris at the southern end of the trench (nearest the Church) was cleaned away to reveal the foundation of a double brick wall which becomes stone nearer the river. Digging through the rubble in the middle of the trench exposed an extension of the concrete floor across a room of the cottage to a lovely fireplace. The brick supports of the fire surround are still in place to about 5 courses above floor level and the hearth was tiled in a pattern of cream and amber ceramic tiles. Part of the cottage wall to the motte side of the fireplace is still standing and the plaster is coloured (painted?) light green. The weir end of the trench was dug, removing a lot of demolition debris with various metal finds – large metal door hinges in particular. The pile of rubble at this end of the trench is very high and there is a lot more digging to do to get down to cottage floor level. Some more Roman Grey Ware was found along with a small medicine bottle and some objects as yet unidentified.



Photo courtesy of the Tadcaster Riverbank Dig Group, Dr Greg Lodge, and Tadcaster Historical Society

DAY 2 - SATURDAY 11 APRIL

Work commenced at 08:30 today. After a grey damp start, it turned into another lovely day. There were about 30 volunteers today with about 25 on site at most times through the day. Work continued on the five test pits that were opened yesterday. These are the Test Pits marked TP1 -5 on the proposed trench and test pit location plan. A longer trench (Trench 1) was opened which started on the large mound at the weir end of the site and came towards the Church for about 4 metres.

Overnight, several keen volunteers had taken old maps of the cottages and had tried to scale them. Some initial test measurements of identifiable features showed that the 1893 map was fairly accurate. This enabled us to relate the test pits to features on the map.

When planning the dig, a “worst case scenario” was that the full artefact count was one broken clay pipe. By 10:00 on Day 2, we had this first clay pipe. Soon after, interesting things were starting to appear.

TP1 is thought to be in an open area beside the last three cottages to be demolished. It contains a path made of large stones at a relatively shallow depth. These have been removed and the earth below has been carefully trowelled back. By sifting the soil removed, several interesting items have been found. These include some colourful mid 19th Century slipware pottery from the West Riding, some large animal teeth and part of a jawbone, and a piece of Roman Grey Ware pottery. A lady whose family lived in one of these cottages in the 1950s brought some photos of the yard at the side of the cottage which showed the stone surface uncovered yesterday.

TP2 is probably at the boundary between the southerly cottage demolished in the 1960s and the cottages nearer the Church that were demolished in the 1930s. This pit has been carefully cleaned up and is partially recorded. It contains a sloping concrete path or floor

with bricks forming a foundation for a wall and possibly a doorway. There is an enamel pan lid embedded in one side of the trench.

TP3 is in an open area between the two sets of cottages. The stone wall found yesterday correlates with a line feature on the map which could have been a garden wall. This wall was removed this morning and the ground below was trowelled and sieved. This caused the main excitement of the day with the discovery of three pieces of Roman pottery. One piece was a fine, decorated piece of Grey Ware with the other two fragments being sturdier. Later in the day, several teeth from a small animal were found. A small piece of 18th Century slipware pottery was also identified.

TP4 is in the front garden of one of the cottages demolished in the 1930s. After careful recording of the concrete path and raised edging, the path was removed. The raised edging was two stone flags. The foundations of the concrete path included several large pieces of a 19th Century cream and brown glazed pot possibly from Hammonds Brewery Tadcaster (One piece has the letters HA and TAD on it.) Other finds included four pieces of clay pipe stem. However, the most stunning find was a drain and drain cover set in a stone slab, completely covered by the later concrete path. Quite an enigma.

TP5 is probably located inside one of the cottages demolished in the 1930s. This pit has been meticulously recorded during the day.

Trench 1 was opened today. This has involved the uncovering and removal of large quantities of demolition rubble (bricks, stone and roof tiles) at the north end. Full marks to the families who toiled away all day on this! Towards the southern end of the trench there was a struggle to get through the ivy and nettle roots. Once through, a concrete floor was uncovered. This floor has a brick edge (probably a wall) and has been painted green at some stage. It is obviously inside one of the northern cottages that were demolished in the 1960s. Some finds included some pieces of green and maroon glazed wall tile and an electric socket cover (MK 15A three round pin).

DAY 1 - FRIDAY 10 APRIL

On Wednesday (8 April), the fencing was delivered and erected around the site. A couple of laminated pages of information are posted on the fence so that passers-by can read what is about to take place.

Work commenced at 08:30 today. The number of volunteers varied between 10 and 15 as the day went on. Five test pits were opened. These are the pits marked TP1 -5 on the proposed trench and test pit location plan.

There is a considerable amount of demolition debris on the site

TP1 has revealed what looks like a path made of large stones at a relatively shallow depth. These have been recorded ready for removing prior to digging further down.

TP2 scored a direct hit on a long since felled tree. This pit was relocated to one side. This appears to be revealing a floor which may be inside or outside a cottage.

TP3 has found a stone wall which could be the base of the front wall of one of the cottages.

TP4 produced what may be a concrete path at the front of a cottage with an edging to the garden.

TP5 has located a large baulk of wood and some paving.

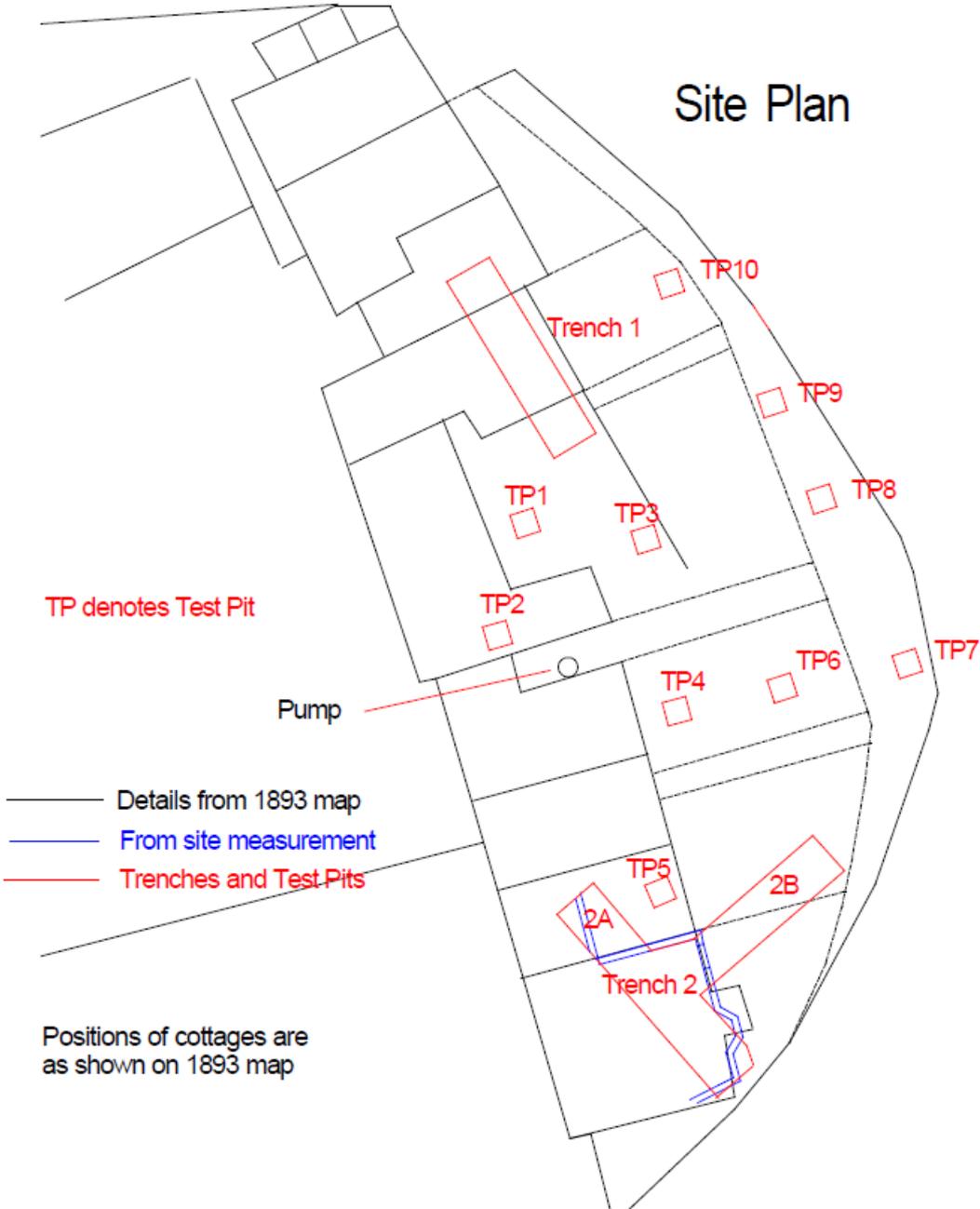
Work on all of these will continue to determine what is further down.

Finds – nothing particularly spectacular so far but it has not been carefully examined yet.

There are various items of pottery and some older bricks. One piece of pottery was dated at 1945 on the basis of the date printed in large letters underneath! The iron age pottery makers were never so thoughtful.

The height of a temporary benchmark on site has been checked against the benchmark on the church tower. This will be used as the reference for all of the surveying on the site.

Site Plan

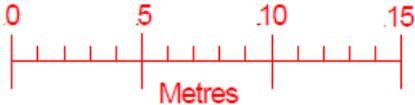


TP denotes Test Pit

Pump

- Details from 1893 map
- From site measurement
- Trenches and Test Pits

Positions of cottages are as shown on 1893 map



Revision 2