



AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION AT AUBOROUGH STREET, SCARBOROUGH



General view of the site showing the excavation in progress

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION AT AUBOROUGH STREET, SCARBOROUGH

By

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Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society
Interim Report 39 2010

SITE: AUBOROUGH STREET, SCARBOROUGH

NATIONAL GRID REF TA 04401 89053
SAHS SITE CODE AS07
MUSEUM ACCESSION No. SCAR.2007.310

Summary

This week long excavation was carried out in the garden of T L Chapman's premises on the eastern side of Auborough Street. This has been open land since at least 1725 and it was hoped the excavation would provide information on the alignment of the Old Borough defences towards their northern end.

Three trenches were put down, one against the boundary wall with the Mariners Homes on Tollergate.

Under relatively modern overburden, the excavation found that the site had been quarried for clay in the post medieval period. The 'quarries' took the form of long narrow trenches separated by narrow clay baulks which it is thought were designed to avoid contamination of the extracted clay before its use in brick or tile making.

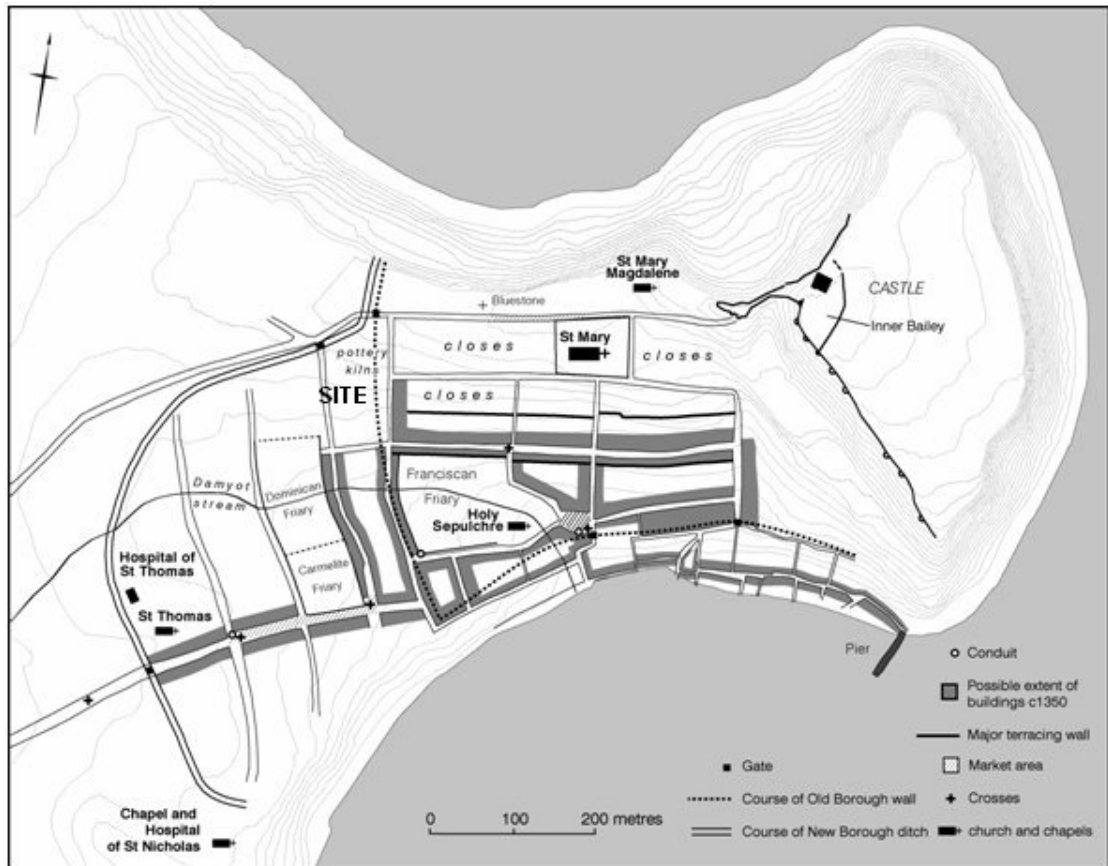
Similar 'quarries' have been found at Paradise and Tollergate

List of text drawings and photographs

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Over the period 26 May-3 June 2007 the Society carried out a research excavation on a piece of land forming the curtilage of a large property in Auborough Street, Scarborough. The location of the area investigated is shown on Figure 1. The total area of the site is approximately 20 metres west-east by 18 metres north-south
- 1.2 The site lies to the west of Tollergate and east of Auborough Street close to the possible alignment of the Oldborough defences and close to the known location of the medieval pottery industry – see Figure 1. The site consisted of a large lawned area sloping down in a southerly direction from a terrace below the house. The extreme eastern part of the site had been a vegetable garden which had become overgrown whilst the lawn was divided roughly in half by a north-south running concrete path. The southern part of the site appeared to consist of a substantial level of fill.
- 1.3 The underlying geology consists of boulder clay. The accompanying soil association was not known since the site lies in a built-up area that has not been surveyed by the Soil Survey of England and Wales (Mackney *et al.* 1983).



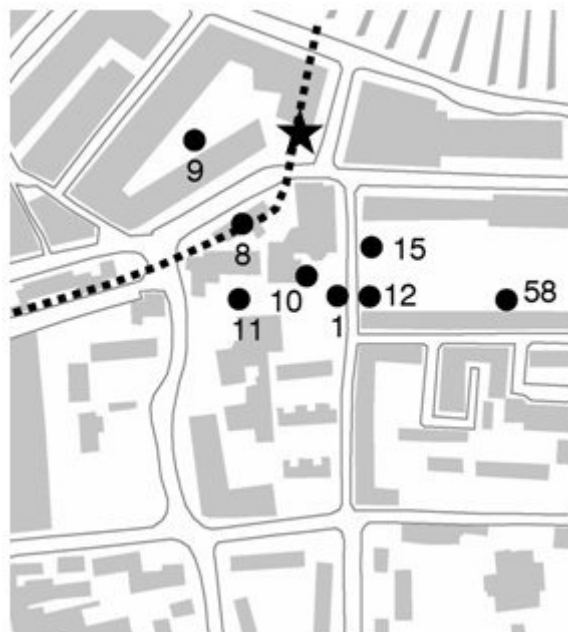
1 Location of the site and its relation to known Medieval features

2.0 Aims and Objectives

2.1 The overall objective of the archaeological research was to provide evidence as to the northern alignment of the Old Borough defences and in particular to establish whether there is any evidence to support the theory which has been put forward that the eastern boundary of this site represents the alignment of the Old Borough defence. If this were so the excavation was designed to show whether there was any evidence of the survival of the ditch, rampart or wall. It was also hoped to provide evidence of what activities may have been taking place in this possible extra-mural area and in particular the relationship with the pottery industry which occupied land to the north.

3.0 Historical and Archaeological Background

3.1 The site lies within an area of archaeological importance, on the boundary between the Old and New Boroughs. An assessment of previous archaeological discoveries in the area has been carried out by T Pearson (Pearson 1987 and Pearson 2005) and this provides the archaeological and historical context within which the investigation of the current site was placed - see Figure 2.



2 Archaeological excavations and discoveries in the vicinity of the site

3.2 The previous archaeological investigations which are relevant to the present project are as follows:-

- Site 1 Auborough Street 1997 Site Code: AS97

Although within the area of the medieval pottery industry no evidence of pottery manufacture was found apart from several sherds which had been distorted during the firing process. Part of the site was quarried for clay in the eighteenth or nineteenth century - see also Hall

- Site 8. Castle Road (Nos. 95–97) 1854
A series of brick arches were uncovered in 1854 on the site of Nesfield's brewery on the south side of Castle Road and identified as medieval pottery kilns. A large quantity of medieval pottery was also found

- Site 9. Castle Road (Wilson's Mariners' Asylum) 1966
Roman pottery from the fourth century was found and features which Farmer attributed to be a section of the medieval town ditch and rampart - see also Farmer 1982

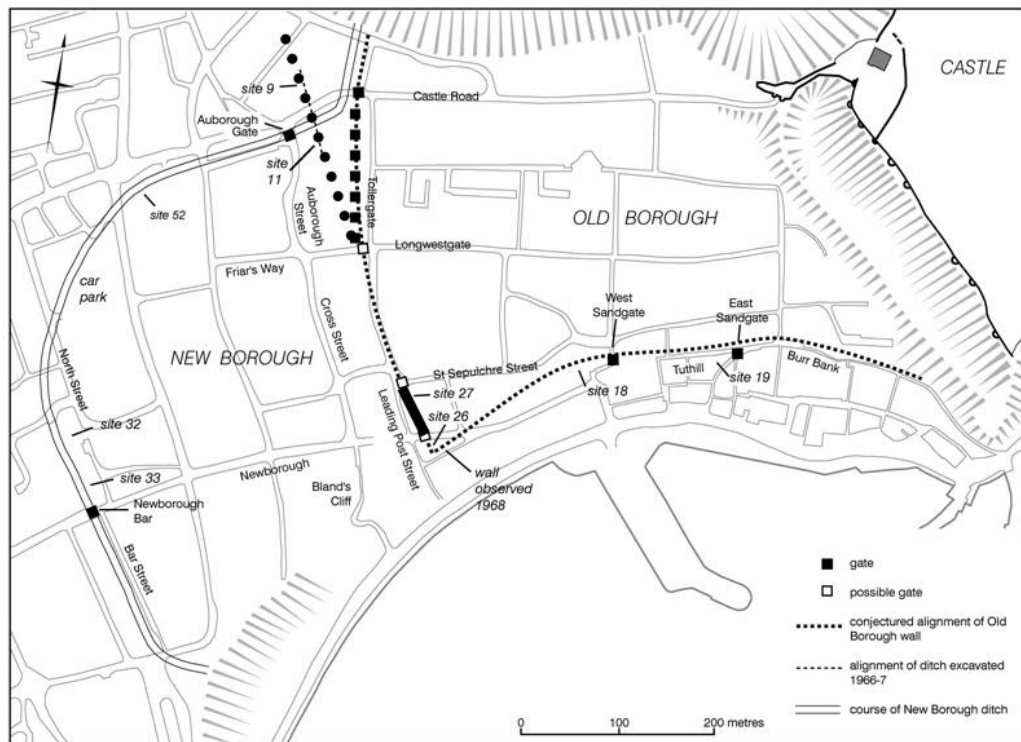
- Site 10. Castle Road (St Peter's Church) 1967
Pottery kilns and kiln waste were discovered.

- Site 11. Castle Road (St Mary's Parish House) 1967
Farmer attributed the finds to remains of the medieval Old Borough defences, medieval pottery kilns and a late-fourteenth century stone building were excavated. Several Roman tiles were also found on the site see also Farmer 1979

3.3 In 2006 an evaluation excavation at 1-4 Blenheim Street (junction of Blenheim Street and Castle Road), opposite St Peter's church (not numbered on Figure 2 but shown by a star symbol) revealed evidence of a medieval ditch running parallel to Castle Road, and evidence either for terracing or for a defensive ditch associated with the medieval town defences. A sherd of pottery of possible Anglo-Saxon date recovered from one these ditches is an important indication of the potential for earlier activity in this area (On Site Archaeology 2006). Further work on this site was carried out in November 2007 (On Site Archaeology 2008). This excavation revealed a substantial ditch which was interpreted as the 12th century defensive ditch of the Newborough. Although it was previously thought that this defensive ditch ran along the south side of Castle Road towards the Auborough gate, this excavation suggested that, at least in part, the defensive ditch was located on the north side of Castle Road. The ditch appeared to have remained open for a considerable time, although there was some deliberate backfilling in the 17th century. However this excavation seems to have revealed no evidence of the alignment of the Oldborough defence nor of the the junction between the Newborough and Oldborough defences.

3.4 The New Borough of Scarborough is believed to have been created by King Henry II in the second half of the 12th century and extended the area of settlement of medieval Scarborough to the west of the Old Borough which had also been founded by Henry II circa 1163. The Old Borough was de-limited on its western side by a ditch, rampart and wall whilst it is believed that the New Borough was delimited by defences which were probably not constructed until 13th century and comprised a

ditch and rampart, which, by the 16th century, were supplemented by a stone wall in places but were largely palisade. The line of these defences survived into the 19th century and they are shown on the 1852 Ordnance Survey map of the town. The alignment of the Old Borough defences is less certain at this northern end of the town. The Author and T. Pearson have postulated an alignment of the Old Borough defences which would take them on a more eastern course than the generally accepted one postulated by Peter Farmer on the basis of excavation carried out. Maps and boundary analysis support the thesis that a more easterly course was taken (Pearson 2005 – see figure 3).



3 Showing the conjectured alignment of the northern part of Old Borough defences (square dotted line), the alignment postulated by Farmer in 1966-67 (circular dotted line) and the proven southern alignment (solid black line)

The archaeological excavation attempted to determine whether this site is within or outside the Old Borough

- 3.5 The current site is shown on Cossins map of 1725 as not built upon and it has remained as such ever since - it was probably vacant in the medieval period. Regressive map analysis has shown that the eastern boundary of the site has persisted over this period moreover it follows a slight curve which reflects the curve in the street pattern in the Newborough. It is thought that this curving pattern reflects the medieval field boundaries. The eastern boundary of the site is therefore highly significant.
- 3.6 In addition to the medieval defences and pottery industry referred to above, previous discoveries show there is some evidence of Roman

and pre-conquest activity in the area and also evidence of 18th or 19th century clay quarrying.

4.0 Methodology of the excavation

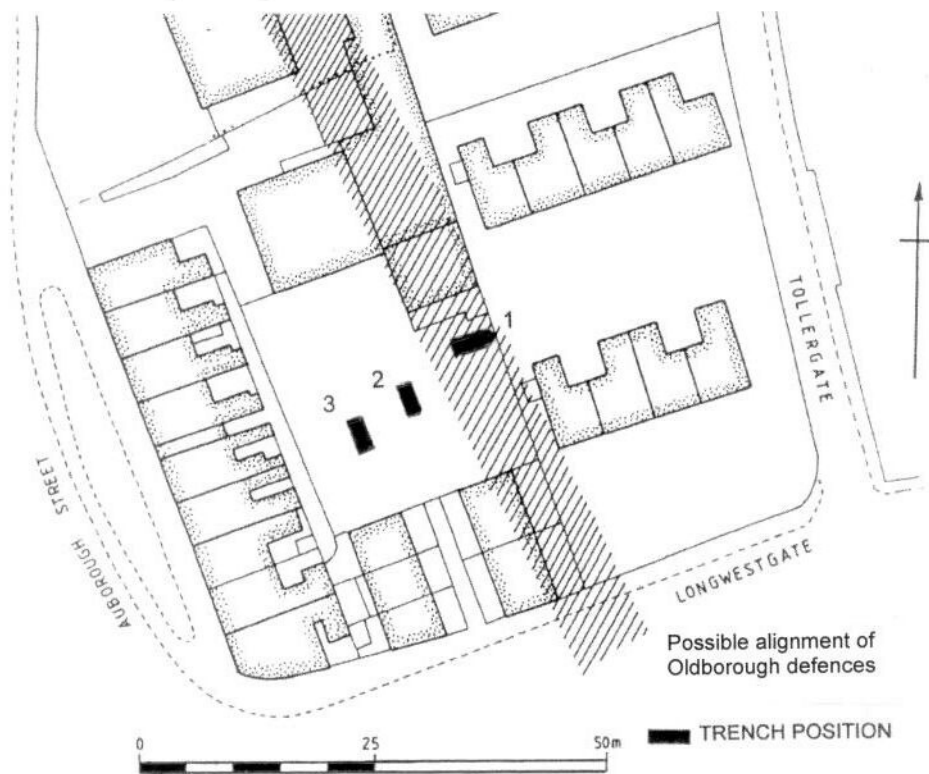
- 4.1 This archaeological research project was carried out in accordance with a Written Statement of Investigation prepared following guidelines laid down by the County Heritage Unit. The WSI was submitted to the Senior Archaeologist at the County Heritage Unit before the project commenced.
- 4.2 All archaeological deposits were recorded according to correct principles of stratigraphic excavation on SAHS's pro forma context sheets.
- 4.3 Drawings - conventionally-scaled plans and sections (1:20 scale) on drawing film were carried out for each trench area to show the horizontal and vertical distribution of contexts. Due to a substantial similarity of stratification across each trench only two sides of each trench were recorded in section.
- 4.4 Photographic record - The photographic record comprises colour prints (see Annex 2); colour transparencies and digital images to record all archaeological features encountered.
- 4.5 All small finds which provided dating and archaeological evidence such as pottery, bone and other finds were collected, recorded contextually, marked and subject to preliminary analysis by SAHS's own team and entered on a database in the site archive. The database is set out at Annex 3.

All finds will be deposited with the Scarborough Museums and Gallery Service along with the archaeological site archive in accordance with the Society's formal practice established over 60 years – Accession number SCAR.2007.310.

- 4.6 Environmental Sampling – because of the nature of the deposits, no environmental samples were taken.
- 4.7 Context numbers. The Society's system of context numbering consists of two letters representing the site name (in this case AS representing Aurborough Street), followed by two digits representing the date followed by a four digit number (preceded by F for a feature). For simplicity in this report AS07 is omitted. Each trench has its own context numbers thus Trench 1 with context numbers beginning at 1000; Trench 2 with context numbers beginning at 2000 and Trench 3 with context numbers beginning at 3000;

5.0 The excavations

5.1 Three trenches were excavated the locations of which are shown in Figure 4. Trench 1 was sited abutting, and perpendicular to, the eastern boundary wall. It measured 1m wide next to the wall and at a point 1 metre back widened to 1.5m for a further 2 metres – this shape had been recommended by the Society’s consultant Engineer in order to maintain the structural integrity of the wall. The purpose of this trench will be to test the archaeological survival adjacent to the wall in order to determine its age, function and purpose in relation to the layout of the town.



4. Locations of the trenches

5.2 Trench 2 measured 2m by 2m and was located in the grass to the west of Trench 1. The purpose of this trench was to test the archaeological survival in this possible extra mural area in particular evidence of settlement or the pottery industry, and to allow Farmers postulated alignment of the Old Borough defences to be tested. Trench 3 was also 2m by 2m in the grassed area to the west of the central path – it had similar objectives to Trench 2.

5.3 In all three trenches, natural clay was encountered at between 1.2 and 1.3 metres below the current ground level. In the case of Trench 2, natural had been excavated to form two linear features running roughly north – south, F2002 and F2004, the natural clay baulk between the cuts being about 120mm wide. These features are similar to ones

found elsewhere in Scarborough eg at Paradise and have been interpreted as clay quarries. In the case of Trench 3 three similar cuts were found, F3002, F3004 and F3006 but running west-east. The baulks between the quarries in this case varied between 120mm and 200mm wide. All these quarry trenches had been backfilled with a dark to mid-brown loam containing pottery, ranging in date from the medieval to the early modern (post 1700), clay pipes, butchered bone and metal objects, indicating that the quarry trenches had been deliberately backfilled with either domestic refuse or material to hand in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century.

- 5.4 The large assemblage of medieval pottery may indicate that waste from the kilns higher up had been pushed down slope during building operations although this is mitigated by the fact that relatively small amounts of Scarborough ware were found, and no obvious waste material from the firing process. Differences in the fill material eg between 3003 and 3005 indicate that the backfilling was carried out in separate phases for each clay quarry. Following the backfilling of the trenches the dumping of soil continued to raise the ground level to its present level. This may have been a result of the levelling of the land during the construction of the present house and outbuildings.



**5.Trench 1 looking north showing the footings of the boundary wall
Scales 2 metres, 1 metre and 500mm**

6. Trench 2 looking north showing the clay quarries and the east – west baulks. Scales 2 metres, 1 metre and 500mm



7. Trench 3 looking north showing the clay quarries and the north – south baulks. The diagonal features seem to be associated with the back filling of the 'quarries'. Scales 2 metres, 1 metre and 500mm



6.0 Interpretation and conclusion

- 6.1 Under relatively modern overburden, the excavation of each trench found that the site had been 'quarried' into the natural for clay thus destroying any earlier archaeology. This took place in the post medieval period. The 'quarries' took the form of long narrow trenches separated by narrow clay baulks. Similar 'quarries' have been found at other locations in the town such as at Paradise and Tollergate. These 'quarries' are interpreted as the systematic digging of clay, probably for brick or tile making, each 'quarry' being big enough to produce enough material for the firing of one kiln. After excavation of the clay the 'quarry' was rapidly backfilled and it is thought another strip was excavated leaving the baulk between avoid contamination of the clay.
- 6.2 No evidence was found for the moat of the Newborough defence. Had the moat existed here the natural clay would have been at a substantially lower level than found which would have been a deterrent to the use of the land for clay quarrying. No evidence was found for the rampart associated with the defences. It is unlikely that the rampart was 'quarried' away for brick and tile making since the clay would not have been sufficiently 'pure' for this purpose and the removal of the rampart as overburden to reach the natural clay would not have been cost effective
- 6.3 Although it is disappointing that evidence of the alignment of the town defences was not found the excavation did show that the defences were not on the alignment postulated by Farmer nor does the eastern boundary wall form the eastern side of the defences as postulated by Hall and Pearson. If they exist at all, the defences must be to the east of the boundary wall. ,
- 6.4 The discovery of this further series of clay quarries is interesting. They represent valuable evidence of an economic activity which was taking place in the town which has now been found in a number of locations. This clay quarrying is activity which merits further research both documentary and archaeological.

7.0 Acknowledgements

- 7.1 The Society and the excavation directors extend their thanks to Peter Chapman of T L Chapman & Son for allowing access to this site for this research excavation and for making provision for the storage of equipment.
- 7.2 Roger Maughan of Maughan Associates provided advice on the structural stability of the boundary wall and the design of the trench near it.
- 7.3 The excavation was directed by the author and Trevor Pearson with Sue Wood as site supervisor, and carried out by SAHS members Frank

Beeley, Steve Bence, Craig Bridgewood, Rachel Cubitt, Chris Evans, Lynn Grey, Alice Hodgson, Gill Hodgson, Linda Kemp, Ron Lewis, Carolyn Milner, Vanessa Milner, Sue Ogilvy, Jen Ryan, Sue Sadler, Adrian Tyson, Louisa Tyson and Ian Walker

7.4 Gail Falkingham, Heritage Team Leader, North Yorkshire County council is thanked for her advice and guidance

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AUTHOR	DATE	TITLE
Crouch, D & Pearson, T (eds)	2001	Medieval Scarborough, studies in Trade & Civic Life YAS/SAHS Occasional Paper No1
Farmer, P G.	1979	An Introduction to Scarborough Ware and a Re-assessment of Knight Jugs. Brighton: privately published
Farmer, P G & Farmer, N C	1982	The dating of the Scarborough ware pottery industry. <i>Medieval Ceramics</i> 6: 66–86.
Hall, C.	1977	An archaeological evaluation at St Peter's School, Auborough Street, (SAHS Interim Report 26, 1997)
Mackney, D (Ed)	1983	Soils of England and Wales
On Site Archaeology	2006	Blenheim Street, Scarborough - Report on an Archaeological Evaluation Report No OSA06EV05
On Site Archaeology	2008	Blenheim street Scarborough – report on Archaeological excavation. Report No OSA07EX05
Pearson, T	1987	An Archaeological Survey of Scarborough Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
Pearson, T	2005	The Archaeology of Medieval Scarborough; Excavation & Research 1987-2004. Scarborough Archaeological & Historical Society Research Report 12

Maps & Plans Consulted

1538	View of Scarborough	
1725	A new and exact plan of Scarborough	J Cossins
1747	A plan of Scarborough	W Vincent
1770	A plan of Scarborough	published in Jeffries
1798	A plan of Scarborough	published in Hinderwell,
1811	A plan of Scarborough	published in Hinderwell,
1828	A plan of the Town and Environs of Scarborough	J Wood
1842	A plan of Scarborough from an actual survey	A G Tyson
1850	Plan of Scarborough	J Petch
1852	Ordnance Survey plan of Scarborough at a scale of 1:1056	
1892	Ordnance Survey plan of Scarborough at a scale of 1:500	
1912	Ordnance Survey plan of Scarborough at a scale of 1:2500	

1929 Ordnance Survey plan of Scarborough at a scale of 1:2500
1939 Ordnance Survey plan of Scarborough at a scale of 1:2500
1965 Ordnance Survey plan of Scarborough at a scale of 1:1250

ANNEX 1 - LIST OF CONTEXTS..

Context number	Trench	Type	Description
1000	1	layer	topsoil
1001	1	layer	dark brown sub soil in sondage at west end
1002	1	layer	dark to mid brown loam in sondage at east end
F1003	1	feature	brick wall on a stone base
1004	1	layer	compact orange/brown lens of clay –re-deposited
1005	1	layer	re-deposited clay
F1006	1	cut	sub-circular cut into re-deposited clay
1007	1	layer	compact mid yellow/brown clay
F1008	1	feature	clay quarry baulk into both re-deposited and natural clay
1009	1	layer	compact mid brown clay – re-deposited
1010	1	layer	compact mid brown clay with charcoal – re-deposited
1011	1	fill	mid brown loam fill of F1006
2000	2	layer	turf and topsoil
2001	2	layer	compact mid grey subsoil
F2002	2	cut	cut into natural clay
2003	2	fill	fill of F2002 mid to dark brown loam, charcoal etc
F2004	2	cut	another cut into natural forming clay baulk
2005	2	fill	fill of F2004 mid to dark brown loam, charcoal etc
2006	2	feature	clay baulks part of backfilling
2007	2	fill	compact mid to dark brown loam fill between 2006/2008
2008	2	feature	clay baulks part of backfilling
2009	2	fill	compact mid to dark brown loam fill of quarry
2010	2	fill	compact mid to dark brown loam fill of quarry
F2011	2	cut	cut into natural to form quarry bottom
3000	3	layer	turf and topsoil
3001	3	layer	compact dark grey brown subsoil
F3002	3	cut	linear cut into natural clay
3003	3	fill	compact dark brown loam fill of F3002
F3004	3	cut	linear cut into natural clay
3005	3	fill	compact dark brown/orange loam fill of F3004 differs from 3003
F3006	3	cut	linear cut into natural clay
3007	3	fill	compact dark brown orange loam fill of F3006
3008	3	fill	fill of F3009
F3009	3	cut	Later cut into clay quarry resulting in loss of part of baulk

ANNEX 2 – BREAKDOWN OF POTTERY BY TRENCH & PERIOD

TRENCH 1						TRENCH 2				TRENCH 3				
Context	Medieval	Post-med	Modern	clay pipe	Post-med	Context	Medieval	Modern	clay pipe	Context	Medieval	Post-med	Modern	clay pipe
1000	■		■	3		2000	■		18	3000	■		■	6
1001	■	■		2		2001	■	■	1	3001	■		■	3
1002	■		■			2002	■		2	3002				
1003	■		■	■		2003	■	■	1	3003	■		■	■
1004	■					2004				3004				
1005	■		■	■		2005	■	■	■	3005	■	■	■	
1006						2006	■			3006				
1007	■		■	■		2007	■	■	■	3007				
1008						2008				3008		■	■	■
1009	■					2009			4					
1010	■					2010		■						
1011	■	■	■	■										

Under clay pipes the numbers indicate the number of bowls

The complete index of finds from the site is held in the site archive deposited with Scarborough Museum