

# **Review of the evidence from excavations at Castleford**

Results of the Assessment of the archive from the  
1988-89 excavations in the *Vicus* for the West  
Yorkshire Archaeological Service

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# 1 Introduction

This document assesses the results of the work commissioned in 2003 by the West Yorkshire Archaeological Service following the initial assessment submitted in 2002. The commissioned work concentrated on assessing the samian pottery and the stratigraphy of sites 42, 44 and 51. The individual assessments have already been submitted and the information has been incorporated into the Access database created as part of the assessment. A copy of this database is included with this document.

The initial assessment had the following project aims: -

- 1.1 Identification and exploration of the 70s activity.
- 1.2 Identification and exploration of the main period of site activity.
- 1.3 Identification of any specially noteworthy features of the finds assemblage.

The work reported on here has addressed the first and second of these aims. It was felt after the preliminary assessment of the records that there was probably little evidence extant to explore 1.1, it is now clear that this was too pessimistic an assessment and some information can be extracted about 1<sup>st</sup> century activity. There is a wealth of information about the 2<sup>nd</sup> century occupation and there is good evidence for continued occupation in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century in the form of buildings being erected at that time.

In what follows problems with the archive still outstanding from the initial assessment are considered first, followed by an assessment of the dating evidence. Our current understanding of the activity on the sites is then given. This is followed by a brief consideration of how these excavation add to our knowledge of what is going on at Castleford. The programme of the further work needed if the excavations are to be published is outlined. Finally suggestions of how the work might be published are provided.

## 2 Problems with the archive

### 2.1 Ironwork

During the assessment it was established that c. 60% of the ironwork had not been X-radiographed and was potentially missing. We assume, having not been informed otherwise, that this material will not be available for any further work.

### 2.2 Samian pottery

During Mrs Ward's assessment, it was established that there was less samian than the original records listed. In total 249 fragments

appeared to be missing. Of the sites considered here, 44 and 51 have some missing samian.

### 2.3 Site records

Elements of these are still missing. The worst affected sites are 42 and 44 where no plans, sections or photographs are available.

## 3 The dating evidence

Mrs Ward's assessment of the samian pottery has now provided a powerful dating tool. This can be used in two ways in addition to the date range provided by individual sherds: by looking at the origin of the assemblage and by looking at the incidence of burnt samian.

	Site 42			Site 44				Site 51			
	SG	CG	Total	SG	CG	EG	Total	SG	CG	EG	Total
LUB 01	14	-	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LUB 02	224	14	238	-	90	-	90	-	-	-	-
LUB 03	-	-	-	-	63	-	63	-	-	-	-
LUB 04	37	-	37	32	1245	-	1277	52	91	-	143
LUB 05	-	-	-	5	805	-	810	23	290	-	313
LUB 06	-	-	-	3	51	-	54	414	1243	-	1657
LUB 07	39	-	39	4	993	-	997	-	241	38	279
LUB 08	70	27	97	24	3565	-	3589	32	183	10	225
LUB 09	-	-	-	1	1117	-	1118	-	329	-	329
LUB 10	7	38	45	5	1485	-	1490	-	6	-	6
LUB 11	18	18	36	2	1339	9	1350	63	469	-	532
LUB 12	7	11	18	-	-	-	-	244	1250	-	1494
LUB 13	46	-	46	-	-	-	-	13	799	16	828
LUB 14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	105	-	113
LUB 15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LUB 16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	35	3771	306	4112
LUB 17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LUB 18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	160	1406	193	1759
u/s	103	549	652	20	1402	146	1568	394	1283	-	1677
<b>Total</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>657</b>	<b>1222</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>12155</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>12406</b>	<b>1438</b>	<b>11466</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>13467</b>

Table 1: Sources of samian pottery from Sites 42, 44 and 51 (by weight)

By looking at the origin of the sherds a rapid appreciation of broad dating within the Land Use Blocks (LUBs) can be gained. Mrs Ward commented on the low levels of southern Gaulish samian and scarcity of East Gaulish products. Though it would be simplistic to equate southern Gaulish samian with 1<sup>st</sup> century occupation, Central Gaulish with the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and East Gaulish with the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, it is reasonable to suspect that any LUB where there Southern Gaulish products form an appreciable amount of the samian assemblage is likely to be of 1<sup>st</sup> or early 2<sup>nd</sup> century date. As can be seen in Table 1, the samian assemblage for Site 42 is dominated by Southern Gaulish products suggesting that it is on this site that the best evidence for 1<sup>st</sup>

century occupation will be found. This approach has also proved useful in clarifying the date of some of the activity on Site 51 even when the coarse pottery spot dates would suggest a date range extending well into the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

<i>End date</i>	<i>Burnt</i>	<i>Not burnt</i>	<i>Total</i>
65	-	-	-
70	-	-	-
75	-	-	-
80	-	-	-
85	-	3	3
90	-	-	-
95	12	-	12
100	24	18	42
110	35	25	60
120	2	31	33
125	28	126	154
130	-	41	41
135	-	66	66
140	190	21	211
145	605	695	1300
150	522	900	1422
160	568	1098	1666
170	284	844	1128
180	59	300	359
185	-	12	12
190	-	193	193
200	38	114	152
<b>Total</b>	<b>2367</b>	<b>4487</b>	<b>6854</b>

Table 2: incidence of burnt samian (by weight) amongst material with a date range of 30 years or less.

The incidence of burnt samian in sites 44 and 51 is also a good indicator of activity post-dating c. AD 140-150. It has long been clear that a shop or warehouse containing large amounts of samian pottery was burnt down in the vicinity of Trench 1/74 (*Castleford III*, 36-55). The date of this is placed between AD 140-50, and was thought to be nearer the former date than the latter (*ibid.* 55). Similar material was found in Trench 10 (*ibid.* 85) and elsewhere in Dixon Street during a watching brief in 1989 (*Castleford II*, 17); and it would seem that the debris from the fire was widely scattered through the *vicus* area. During the assessment the state of the samian fragments was noted. Table 2 shows those sherds which were assigned a date range of 30 years or less, tabulated according to whether they were burnt or not. As can be seen, burnt samian fragments with end dates in the 1<sup>st</sup> and early 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries are occasionally found, but burnt samian does not occur in large quantities until the fragments with end dates of 145 are inspected. Nearly

half of those (by weight) are burnt. The proportion then progressively declines for the fragments with end dates of 150, 160 and 180. This is precisely the pattern that would be expected if much of the burnt samian was being derived from the burnt pottery shop. Clearly not all of the burnt samian derives from the pottery shop; some will undoubtedly derive from other episodes of burning given that those can be seen in the stratigraphic narrative. Contexts with burnt samian whose dates span the 140-50 period, however, are likely to belong to the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. even if the suggested dates make an earlier date possible (e.g. AD 120-160).

A comparison of the samian dates for contexts with those of the pottery spot dates indicates that the latter have to be used with some caution. The date ranges proposed are often so long as not to be helpful on a site like Castleford where buildings were being erected, used and demolished several times on the same sites within relatively short periods. On site 51 and 44 the recorded presence of Black Burnished 1 (BB1) can be used to suggest dates after AD 120 when these vessels started to be used in the north. The presence of BB1 is not mentioned in the spot dating list for site 42, other than in the group of pottery from Mr Jeffrey's excavations on the site. It is unclear whether this really represents an absence of BB1 from the WYAS excavations on that site, which is a possibility given that those excavations may have been dealing primarily with 1<sup>st</sup> to early 2<sup>nd</sup> century contexts; or whether it is the result of how the pottery was listed on that site.

Some of the small finds and fragments of vessel glass have also been useful as a dating indicator, especially for the later 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century contexts where the samian is of less use.

## **4 An outline of the occupation on the sites**

### **4.1 Constraints on our knowledge caused by the excavation strategies**

The examination of the records has now made it clear that natural was reached on sites 42 and 51. Excavation was abandoned on site 44 before natural was reached. There is no record of the latest phases of occupation on site 44 as this had been excavated by Ron Jeffries. This means that the earliest occupation can only be examined on sites 42 and 51 and the latest on sites 44 and 51. Here the sequence on site 42 will be described first, followed by those of sites 51 and 44 to reflect this chronology. Though the sites are spatially very close, they appear to have different sequences. Provisional phases have been used for each individual site as it would be premature to propose a periodisation that covered all three sites.

### **4.2 Site 42**

This site is characterised by a north/south road with occupies the eastern side of the site and a sequence of buildings with their gable ends facing onto the road. There are four separate phases of building on the site as well as one phase when the site was occupied only by the road and a ditch. Phase 1 was most probably of 1<sup>st</sup> century date. Phases 2-5 all appear to belong to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Such evidence for the date of Phase 4 as there is suggests a mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century date. The evidence from the lane of Phase 5 might suggest a slightly

later date but there is no evidence that people were passing along it and dropping things by the end of the century. Given the intense occupation seen up to Phase 5, it might be suspected that by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century or beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, the Phase 5 features might have been replaced by something else which would have been removed during Mr Jeffries excavations.

There is very little indication of the nature of the occupation on the site. There is no obvious industrial debris either in the form of objects or charcoal, though the ovens in the Phase 1 structure 1 suggest it was probably not a domestic building. Isolated items of 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> century military equipment were found stratified in the earliest layers of Phase 1 and the lane of Phase 5

### **Phase 0 - Natural (LUB 01 LUB 03)**

The layers that can be considered as disturbed natural have no extant samian or small finds, though the spot dating lists for 518 record South Gaulish samian which is now missing. Late 1<sup>st</sup> century coarse pottery is also recorded from one of these disturbed contexts (548). Clearance of the site is marked by a possible tree-hole (LUB 03) that is sealed by layers associated with Phase 1.

### **Phase 1 – Initial occupation, structure 1 and Road (LUBs 02, 04-07)**

The finds from the road sequence (LUB 02) were given a single context number meaning that dating different parts of it will not be possible, but the very strong presence of south Gaulish samian would indicate it had a 1<sup>st</sup> century origin.

The earliest stratigraphy (513, 514, 545) appears to have been removed as a spit/ single layer and no details of the layers or the nature of the occupation are recoverable. It is not possible to tell whether these layers were a preliminary phase of activity prior to the building of Structure 1, as appears to have happened on Site 51, or reflect the preparation of the site for building. Only South Gaulish samian was associated with them.

A timber building of light construction with a gable end facing onto the road was built (Structure 1). The slots associated with its walls cut the earliest stratigraphy. It probably had wooden floors and contained an elliptical oven that was replaced by two smaller ones. There was very little dating evidence, but the destruction layers of this building only had South Gaulish samian in them, together with a 1<sup>st</sup> century glass pillar moulded bowl fragment.

The finds assemblage from both the earliest stratified layers cut by Structure 1 and from the destruction layers would be consistent with the building being built, occupied and dismantled in the 1<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Phase 2 – Structure 2 (LUB 08) and road**

Structure 1 was replaced by another timber building fronting the road (Structure 2). The samian assemblage from the fills of the slots that defined the walls consisted predominantly of South Gaulish samian together with 1<sup>st</sup> century vessel glass, though there was also one fragment of Central Gaulish samian of indeterminate form dated to AD 120-200. The layers sealing the wall slots after the destruction of the building include a range of Central Gaulish samian fragments dated within the AD 135 - 60 period.

### **Phase 3 – road widening and ditch (LUB 09-10)**

After Structure 2 had been demolished a series of gravel and clay layers encroached onto the area of the front of the former buildings. A ditch ran in over the area of the former buildings with a butt end against the road. No closely dateable material can be associated with the road widening. The fill of the ditch includes a fragment of Central Gaulish samian dated to AD 140-60.

### **Phase 4 – Structures and surfaces (LUB 11)**

A series of gravel, clay and sand layers overlying the features of Phase 2 and 3 can be interpreted as internal and external surfaces suggesting the presence of timber framed buildings, though no details of the plans of these can now be recovered. The samian assemblage associated with these continues to be predominantly Southern Gaulish though there is also a fragment of Central Gaulish samian dated to AD 130-160.

### **Phase 5 – Lane LUB 12 and Structure 13 (LUB 12-13)**

In the south of the site the surfaces of Phase 4 were sealed by a layer of sand and gravel interpreted as a lane bordered by a fence. The samian assemblage includes both South Gaulish fragments and central Gaulish fragment with a date range up to AD 150. There are also two late 1<sup>st</sup> to mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century small finds which are unlikely to have been dropped after the third quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century at the latest.

To the north of the fence there was a masonry building facing the road. It was thought that most of this was removed by Mr Jeffries. It is contemporary with the lane, but has little useful independent dating.

### **Phase 6 - Later occupation**

The later structural history of the site is unknown but the spot-dating list for the pottery includes pieces attributed to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries including Dales ware and probable Crambeck ware

## **4.3 Site 51**

Again the site is characterised by the north-south road to the east of the site and buildings with their gable ends facing onto the road to the west. Unlike Site 42, however, the building activity here does not seem to start until possibly the second quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century (Phase 2). First century activity seems confined to building the road and isolated industrial activity not associated with any obvious structures (Phase 1). Two timber buildings are present in Phase 2 together with external surfaces and a well. It is possible that the two structures are not strictly contemporary, and the northern one (Structure 2) may have been built later than Structure 1 to the south. Probable pottery shop debris was found in the destruction layers, suggesting the buildings were demolished after c. AD 150.

These buildings were replaced in Phase 3 by two other buildings occupying the same sites. The northern one (Structure 3) was stone founded, while that to the south was again of timber construction. The construction, occupation and destruction of these spans the late 2<sup>nd</sup> to early 3<sup>rd</sup> century period. The later history of the site is unclear and no structural evidence has been recovered.

At some point the west of the site was used to dig two graves. The date of these is uncertain, and it is possible that they are post-Roman.

The site was devoted to industrial activity. Scattered evidence for metal-working and enamelling was found in a number of contexts. Crucible fragments were found in the fill of a post-pit associated with Structure 2 (797), and in the fill of the gully marking the north wall of Structure 4. Vitreous slag (probably fuel ash slag) was also found in the post pit 797, and raw red glass for enamelling came from a robbing layer associated with Structure 1 (721). Coarse pottery sherds from the possible make-up layer for Structure 2 were noted as having unusual vitreous slag deposits. The pottery from this layer, however, may be associated with the pottery shop (see below), and detailed examination will be required to establish whether these are indeed related to industrial activity or are a by-product of the fire. The industrial activity can also be traced in the structural record as the middle room of structure 1 has a dense deposit of charcoal and slag.

Isolated items of late 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century military equipment have also been recovered from the site. Unfortunately all either come from unstratified contexts or those associated with the indeterminate occupation of Phase 4. They do, however, strengthen the impression gained from the previous excavations that the army continued to have an interest in Castleford at that time (*Castleford I*, 373; *Castleford II*, 310)

#### **Phase 0 (LUB 01 – 02)**

The layers that can be regarded as disturbed natural contain no items that can be used to date the start of the activity.

#### **Phase 1 - Isolated industrial activity and road (LUB 04 – 05)**

The earliest activity would appear to be the building of the road. In the samian assemblage of the lowest ditch fills, South Gaulish fragments outnumber Central Gaulish ones suggesting 1<sup>st</sup> century activity, though a BB1 fragment is recorded in one of them. There is charcoal in primary fills which would support the idea of industrial activity in the vicinity. The only evidence of this is provided by an isolated pit set back from the road. It had indications of burning in the base and the primary fill contained a type of Trumpet brooch whose *floruit* at Castleford, judged by the earlier excavations, was during the 1<sup>st</sup> century and early 2<sup>nd</sup> century. It was a type that was noticeably absent from mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century occupation (*Castleford I*, 32, Table 9 type 2). The lower fills of the pit also had a samian assemblage dominated by South Gaulish fragments.

#### **Phase 2 – Structure 1, Structure 2, well, external surfaces, road (LUB 03, 05 – 09)**

A timber building divided into three rooms and with the gable end facing the road was erected (Structure 1). The samian in the make-up layers would be consistent with a date in the second quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century which is supported by a fragment of BB1 in one of them. The trench fills for the building have similar material together with an early to mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century glass vessel fragment. This though is at some odds with some of the coarse pottery from these contexts for which a late 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> century date is suggested. That the building and use of this building should be placed in the

second quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century is supported by the burnt samian from the pottery shop which first appears in the robbing fill of one of the walls (721). Similar material occurs in 889 which should probably also be regarded as a robbing fill. Interestingly the spot dating list for 889 notes the fill as having numerous sherds of individual vessels which could be reconstructed. Until the coarse pottery has been looked at in details we cannot be sure what this means, but one possibility might be that the fill has structured deposition and that the vessels were deliberately deposited as a rite of termination. Such deposits have been suspected before at this time (*Castleford I*, p. 362). Alternately, of course, the material might be derived from the pottery shop fire and merely been a useful source of levelling material. Against this, however, it may be noted that the fragments are not recorded as being burnt.

Another timber building with gable end facing the road was built to the north of Structure 1 (Structure 2) only the southern part of which was excavated. One of the post pits cuts layer 776. If this is regarded as make-up, then Structure 2 may have been later than Structure 1 as 776 contains burnt samian from the pottery shop. Only two fragments were available for the assessment, but the spot dating list refers to other burnt samian fragments from the layer. The large coarse pottery assemblage is noted as containing many fragments that have been subject to intense heat, again suggesting we have pottery shop debris being used as make-up.

A well (LUB 08) was dug at the back of Structure 1 during this phase and continued to be used in the following one. The finds from the external surfaces at the south-west of the site (LUB 07) are also consistent with them having been laid down in this phase, and continuing in use into the next.

A pit associated with industrial activity (LUB 03) may well be contemporary with structure 1 judged by its orientation. The finds associated with it are not sufficiently closely dated to suggest whether it belongs to this or the earlier phase of activity.

The road continues in use and sees heavy wear. The fills of some of the potholes (656, 659) and the cobbles layers 646 all have burnt samian from the pottery shop in them.

### **Phase 3 – Structure 3, Structure 4, well, external surfaces, road (LUB10 – 14)**

A stone-founded Structure 3 replaces the timber Structure 2. Only part of this building lay within the excavated area. The samian associated with fills of the construction trenches is of mid to late C2 date but the most diagnostic piece of evidence is a rim fragment of a colourless cylindrical cup in 791 (This is actually the context number of a wall, presumably the backfill 792 is intended). The earliest date known for this very common form is AD 160-170, but it is only during the final quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century they become very common. The implication would be that the building was erected during the final quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century at the earliest. The coarse pottery from the construction trench fills includes occasional 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century fragments, whilst another layer associated with the building (808) had 3<sup>rd</sup> century coarse pottery.

Timber Structure 4 replaces Structure 1 but the date at which this happens is unclear. The layers sealing the Structure 1 post-holes have a mixed and obviously contaminated finds assemblage containing both south Gaulish samian and modern glass fragments. The fill of the gully defining the north wall of the structure (788, 808) contains the occasional sherd of 3<sup>rd</sup> century coarse pottery.

The fills thought to be associated with the destruction of the structure (689, 788, 908, 1004) show evidence of burning and contain a predominantly 2<sup>nd</sup> century pottery assemblage with includes some fragments of 3<sup>rd</sup> century coarse pottery and the occasional East Gaulish samian sherd.

The external surfaces and the well established in the previous phase continues in use as does the road.

#### **Phase 4 – Graves and later activity (LUB 15-16)**

The later activity on the site is problematic. There is very little evidence for any structures that may have replaced Structures 3 and 4 but the pottery assemblage from the latest Roman layers indicated 3<sup>rd</sup> century activity, possibly continuing into the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

At some point two north - south graves were dug through the external surfaces (760, 762). Only 760 contained a skeleton. The fill of 762 included 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century coarse pottery fragments, and sealing layer over them had 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century pottery, albeit with 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century material as well. Given the prohibition of mixing the space of the living and the dead in the Roman world, these graves should mark the end of the use of this area as a living and working space if they belong to the Roman period. The position of these graves at the western end of the trench is similar to the position of the inhumations in Trench 10 (*Castleford II*, 151, fig. 133). The possibility that those post-date the Roman period is discussed in the following section.

#### **4.4 Site 44**

This site was not excavated to natural and the earliest phases are missing. The buildings recovered appear to be strip buildings orientated on the road (not present on this site). Five phases of occupation can be established starting with the earliest extant building dating to the second quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century (Phase 1). This is replaced after the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century by another building with external surfaces and a second building to the south (Phase 2). The northern of these is replaced by a masonry building, possibly before the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century (Phase 3). The two final phases of building (Phase 4-5) are to be dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. Of all the sites excavated within the *vicus* at Castleford, Site 44 is the one with the most convincing structural history extending well into the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. It may also be significant that this was the site where the unstratified context produced a late 3<sup>rd</sup> to early 4<sup>th</sup> century cross bow brooch and a large amount of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century pottery.

Evidence for industrial activity of the type seen on Site 51 is also seen here. A mould fragment was recovered from the cobbled surface of Phase 2 - 3, and more raw red glass came from a Phase 5 context. The late 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century

scabbard slide from a Phase 5 context again points to military interest in the area.

Of particular interest is the fact that fragments of at least four tazze were recovered from this site. Tazze were incense burners and their role in religious life is well established (Mackinder 2000, 37). Three were recovered from the well fill of Phases 2-3, and one from the fill of the beam slot of Structure 3 (Phase 2). Though it is impossible to extract any definitive figures of vessel use from the earlier excavations from the published record, it does appear that tazze were particularly common on Site 10 during Phase 3 (AD 140-180 - *Castleford III*, 130 nos. 355-8, see also 119 no. 230 phase 4). It has been suggested that on Site 10 during Phase 3, building AX had a religious function (*Castleford II*, 300-304). The tazze on Site 44 might suggest that the northern area was part of the religious complex, if that is what it was, and that Phases 2-3 were equivalent of Phase 3 on Site 10. The dating so far established for these phases on Site 44 would not be at odds with that interpretation.

#### **Phase 1 – Structure 1 (LUB 01)**

The earliest evidence on the site is a floor probably from a timber framed building. There is a problem with dating this as the samian recorded in the spot-dating lists now appears to be missing. The coarse pottery is scanty but BB1 is recorded in the floor level, suggesting a date in the second quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century at the earliest.

#### **Phase 2 – Structures 2 and 3, boundary wall and external surfaces (LUB 02- 05)**

The corner of a structure (Structure 2) was represented by a clay floor in the south-east corner whose make-up had burnt samian probably from the pottery shop. To the north there was part of an E/W wall whose line is continued by a gully and post-holes. This probably represents boundary line. The fill of the wall construction trench includes burnt samian from the pottery shop. Both of these features can thus be dated to the mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century at the earliest.

To the north of the boundary gully and parallel with it, a beam trench representing the southern wall of Structure 3 was found butting the end of the boundary wall. This cut a layer partially sealing the earlier gully and was thus later than it. The fill of the beam trench included a late 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century glass jug fragment, a colour coated scale beaker fragment of the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries and a hunt cup fragment of the late 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries. A later 2<sup>nd</sup> into the 3<sup>rd</sup> century date would thus be appropriate for Structure 3

To the south of the boundary line and surrounding Structure 2 there was a cobbled surface. The pottery associated with this included is had mid to late 2<sup>nd</sup> century samian, a fragment of a hunt cup of the late 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century and some fragments of 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century mortaria.

#### **Phase 3 - Structure 2 and 4, well, external surfaces (LUB 06 – 07)**

Structure 2 may continue in use as the contexts relating to it are not sealed until the next phase. The external surfaces to the north and west of it also continue in use. Structure 3 is replaced by a masonry building Structure 4

and a well is built to the rear of it. No floors are associated with Structure 4, and the finds assemblage is not particularly helpful with regard to dating when this building was erected. At the end of its life it was robbed to below ground level. The fills in the well have mid to late 2<sup>nd</sup> century samian, late 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century small finds and occasional fragments of 3<sup>rd</sup> century coarse pottery.

#### **Phase 4– Structure 5 and soil deposits (LUB 08 – 10)**

Structure 1, the external surfaces and the well go out of use and are sealed by a series of loams. Floor areas are present in the area formerly occupied by Structure 4. These are thought to be associated with another building (Structure 5) whose south wall may be represented by a clay spread. Many of the finds associated with the loams and Structure 5 appear to be residual. The destruction layers, however, contain a late 2<sup>nd</sup>/ 3<sup>rd</sup> century finger-ring, 3<sup>rd</sup> century beakers and jars and Dales ware of the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century. It seems probable that this phase reflects activity in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

#### **Phase 5 – Structure or boundary (LUB 11)**

Third century and possibly later activity is definitely present in this phase. The destruction layers of the previous phase are sealed by a layer containing a coin dated to AD 225, a later 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century scabbard slide, a samian assemblage which included East Gaulish products and a 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century coarse pottery assemblage. The layer in turn is cut by the foundation trench from either a building wall or a boundary wall.

## **5 The wider picture**

Despite the problems associated with how these sites were dug and recorded, and the problems with the archive, they do have the potential to add considerably to our knowledge of activity at Castleford. The picture gained from the excavations on Site 1/74 and Trench 10 to the north, was one of three main periods of activity dating from the initial establishment of the fort in the early 70s to the 160s. This occupation was intensive and by the late Hadrianic period large and probably public masonry buildings were being erected in Trench 10. After the hectic activity of the previous century, the abandonment in the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century is most noticeable.

In Trench 10 after the Phase 3 activity, dark earth layers accumulated, and after this a large timber building was erected in the western part of the site, away from the focus of the earlier settlement close to the road. The same area was occupied by a number of inhumation burials, but the relationship of the building and the graves is not stated. The implication has always been that the inhumations were late Roman. Now, however, I do have some doubts about this. The only items that could be associated with the graves were a group of small annular opaque yellow beads found with one of the groups of disturbed human bone (*Castleford I*, 189 nos. 204-210; *Castleford II*, 151). Since writing the bead report more than 10 years ago, I have realised how remarkable rare such beads are in late Roman assemblages, whereas they are not in post-Roman ones (see Guido 1999, 36-7). Were I to be writing the report now, I would undoubtedly be making the case that these beads were indicative of post-Roman activity, and to suggest that these graves belonged to the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> century.

The evidence from Sites 42, 44 and 51 suggests that development in the vicus area may have been more piecemeal than hitherto thought. Whilst late 1<sup>st</sup> century building activity can be seen on the most southerly Site 42, on Site 51 it is absent and the first building was not erected until the equivalent of the end of Phase 2 in the earlier excavations. Equally the sites have not produced anything indicative of the erection of major public buildings as was suggested by the evidence of Trench 10.

Whilst the loam deposits of Phase 4 on Site 44 might be equated with the development of the black earths in Phase 4 of Trench 10, it is clear that not all of the area was abandoned in the later 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Structure 3 (Phase 3) on Site 51 seems to have been built towards the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century at the earliest; whilst on Site 44 the Phase 5 activity seems to indicate a revival of activity after a period of disuse. This is a similar state of affairs as was seen in Trench 10 when the Phase 4 building AY was erected. Whatever the late Roman defences were defending in the area of the former fort to the north, it indeed they are Roman (see Buckland 2002), there is increasing evidence that it did not represent the only area occupied at Castleford at the time.

## 6 The way forward

There is no doubt that publication of these sites is possible. There are problems with the archive but these could be explained and it would be possible to present a fairly coherent narrative. This would augment our knowledge of activity at Castleford, and would allow the evidence of the earlier excavations to be re-assessed in certain respects. Resources should be concentrated on the phases for which have a more or less coherent stratigraphic narrative can be constructed. Those are Phases 1-5 on site 42, Phases 1-4 on site 44 and Phases 1-3 on Site 51. The material from Phase 6 of Site 42, Phase 5 of Site 44, Phase 4 of site 51, and from the unphased and unstratified contexts on all the sites would be dealt with in a more cursory manner to extract the information they can provide about the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century occupation. Using the samian pottery as an example, this approach would mean that 987 vessels present in the former contexts would be taken on to full publication whilst no further detailed work would be done on the 1026 represented in the latter.

The work required to publish the site, together with the reasons why the work is needed are as follows.

### 6.1 Pottery

#### 6.1a Coarse pottery

As explained in the original assessment of the archive, the current listing of the coarse pottery was obviously intended as an aid to spot dating, and were not the basis for the preparation of a publication report. There is no useful quantification or fabric descriptions and identifications. Whilst some well-established fabric types such as BB1 are identified on sites 42 or 51, other descriptions such as 'bicycle tyre ware' are not ones normally used in publications. The number of sherds which will require detailed identification, cataloguing and quantification are as follows: -

Site 42 - 549  
Site 44 - 5165  
Site 51 - 5095

In addition 1231 fragments from Site 42, 705 fragments from Site 44 and 4674 sherds from Site 51 will need to be scanned with items selected for recording if appropriate. In total 10,809 fragments require full recording and 6,611 fragments need to be scanned. It should be noted that these figures have been calculated from the spot dating lists. Occasionally there are internal hints in these that pages may be missing, but as they are not paginated this is difficult to check. It is possible, therefore that some additional pottery will emerge. Equally, given our experience with both the samian and the small finds, less may now be available than was originally recorded.

The coarse pottery needs to be reported on for the following reasons.

- A full report will provide better dating than is currently available. The spot date lists were compiled in the late 1980s, and the dating of many types of coarse pottery is now more refined than it was then. The dating element of the work may well help to tease out the dating of the various 2<sup>nd</sup> century phases where the samian dating is currently dominated by material from the pottery shop. It will be especially important for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and possibly 4<sup>th</sup> century phases where the samian is of little help.
- It should help to clarify the nature of the occupation in this area of the vicus at different periods. It is now well established that different types of sites, e.g. urban, military, rural, etc have different types of pottery assemblages (see for example Evans 1993). If there is a continuing military interest in this part of Castleford in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century as hinted at by some of the military equipment, this should make itself apparent in the coarse pottery assemblage. It should also be possible to explore to what extent the possible ritual complex in Trench 10 in Phase 3 extended into the area of these sites as hinted at by the *tazze* from Site 44.
- The presence of substantial quantities of burnt samian from the pottery shop, strongly suggests that the many references to other burnt items of coarse pottery indicate other vessels that were in stock when it was burnt down. It has been lamented in a review of *Castleford III*, that the method of publication made it difficult to reconstruct groups and that this was especially frustrating in the case of the pottery shop material (Buckland 2002). Combining the quantified evidence from the coarse pottery and samian reports will enable a start to be made in assessing the stock of the pottery shop.
- This report will also provide at the very least a good overview of pottery supply to Castleford in the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century, and possibly in the 1<sup>st</sup> century as well. Various reviewers have pointed out the shortcomings of the coarse pottery report in *Castleford III* brought about by the time it was written, i.e. before the major publications

about the pottery being made in south Yorkshire at Rossington Bridge and at York (Tyers 2001, Buckland 2002), and the non-standard methods of quantification used. This report should redress this problem and provide the tools for a future re-assessment of the material in *Castleford III*.

The time estimated to complete this work is 21 weeks. It is expected that up to 400 drawings might be required. The actual number could probably be substantially reduced if reference was made to illustrations in *Castleford III*, and only forms not represented there or poorly represented were selected for illustration here.

#### 6.1b *Samian pottery*

All of the samian has been fully quantified and has been identified to form and origin level. The outstanding work needed to be done is the identification of the samian stamps, the full cataloguing of the decorated pieces and the preparation of a report describing the supply of samian to this part of Castleford. The opportunity will be taken to compare the burnt pottery from the pottery shop with the unburnt contemporary pottery to see whether the two groups were similar with regard to proportions of forms. If they are different this may suggest that the pottery shop was catering for a specialist market.

The amount of material which will require detailed identification and cataloguing is as follows.

<i>Site</i>	<i>Decorated</i>	<i>Stamps</i>	<i>Plain</i>	<i>Total</i>
42	26	0	31	57
44	198	10	451	659
51	64	10	197	271
<b>Total</b>	288	20	679	987

Table 3: Amount of samian pottery to be taken to full analysis (fragment count)

Given the importance of the burnt pottery shop samian in wider samian studies, it would be sensible to include the burnt material from the unphased and unstratified contexts, as this would give a complete picture of the material. This would add 6 additional stamps and 28 additional decorated vessels to the total to be examined in detail. There is already sufficient information recorded about the plain samian to provide the information needed about the burnt plain samian.

Further work on the samian is needed for the following reasons.

- The samian from the pottery shop has been recognised as a resource of national importance (see for example Tyers 2001, Buckland 2002). The pottery shop material published in *Castleford III* was thought to comprise some 600 samian vessels though no formal attempt at quantification was attempted. Judged from the information available from the assessment of the samian from these sites, over 300 vessels have the potential to be considered as pottery shop stock given that

they have been assigned dates that span the likely date of the fire and are burnt. This is a very sizeable group and the publication of this in a properly quantified form will be of great benefit in helping to understand pottery supply not just to Castleford but more widely in the western Empire. A recent review of samian use in Britain has pointed out that the understanding of the marketing of this pottery is still at a very elementary stage (Willis 2005, 6.1.html). In the long run, properly quantifying all of the pottery shop samian from the Castleford *vicus* would be of inestimable value. In the short run making a start with the publication of the material from this site will be a very useful contribution.

- The work on the stamps and the decorated pieces should help refine the dating of the material and help in constructing the final stratigraphic narrative.
- The composition of the samian assemblage once the the pottery shop material has been extracted should help to characterise the nature of the occupation at different times in the same way as the coarse pottery will.

The time estimated to complete this work is 7 weeks. It is expected that up to 75 drawings might be required, primarily of decorated pieces.

## 6.2 The stratigraphic narrative

The stratigraphic narrative will need to be written. Kate Stearne's analysis of the records was written with the intention that it would form the basis of this. It needs to be up-dated using the new information that will become available after the coarse pottery has been studied. The analysis of the samian pottery may also help refine some of the dating evidence. In as far as possible the aim of the stratigraphic narrative will be to integrate the results from the different sites under consideration with information from sites in the vicinity, both those already published in *Castleford II* and any other unpublished information that WYAS may have access to such as the watching brief in Dixon Street that produced the pottery shop debris and the excavation carried out opposite Trench 10 by Time Team in 2001. My personal recollections from being present during the excavation of the latter was that evidence of industrial activity and tazze were found that would provide links to the sort of activity on Sites 44 and 51, and in the case of the tazze, also with Trench 10.

- The current assessment narratives need to be up-dated into a publishable form taking into account new information from the pottery that was not available when the work was carried out.
- The assessment was done on a site by site basis. To understand what is going on in the area, the information from these sites needs to be integrated with the information from the other sites in the area. Ideally this would be done by preparing plans of the whole area with the different phases identified drawn on. This is obviously going to be problematic because of the absence of the plans for sites 42 and 44,

but the information gained by the context records that do survive is enough to give some help in this.

It is estimated that approximately 4 weeks will be needed for this work, but the precise amount of time will depend on whether WYAS can make available any information from other evaluations or excavations in the area (see above), and the post excavation state of those archives. Four phase plans to scale can be produced for site 51. For the other two sites all that can be produced are sketch plans not to scale. These are, however, useful and informative. For the wider overview of what is going on in the vicus, area wide plans could be produced. It would obviously represent a cost-saving if WYAS could provide the phase plans used in *Castleford II* in an electronic form to be incorporated into these.

### 6.3 The other finds

The other finds were assessed as part of the initial work on the archive, and their potential and the work needed to be carried out on them will not be repeated here. In the light of the proposal to concentrate detailed reporting on the material from contexts with a more or less coherent stratigraphic narrative, the total number of items selected for detailed recording and reporting is shown in the table below. This assumes that missing ironwork is unlikely to be found.

	Site 42	Site 44	Site 51	Total
Copper alloy	15	34	30	79
Lead alloy	1	-	1	2
Iron objects	4	14	43	61
Iron nail	1	58	160	219
Glass vessel	18	134	84	236
Glass object	-	6	7	13
Frit	2	2	1	5
Bone	-	20	11	31
Jet/shale	-	-	1	1
Slag	-	-	22	22
Total	41	268	360	669

Table 4: Quantities of small finds and vessel glass to be taken to full analysis

In addition to these items, various pieces from the unphased or unstratified contexts that cast light on the nature of the occupation such as the crossbow brooch from site 44 will be included in the detailed recording. Approximately 120 small finds and 50 fragments of vessel glass will need detailed cataloguing. There will only occasionally be the need for extended typological discussion as this is already present in *Castleford I*. Since the initial assessment, the raw glass has been subjected to detailed analysis and the results of this are now published (Bayley 2005). A copy of the publication is enclosed with this document for the archive.

Approximately 120 small finds and 50 fragments of vessel glass will need detailed cataloguing. Including conservation and analytical work on the slags, it is anticipated that 3 weeks will be required to complete this work.

## 6.4 The environmental evidence

The work Barbican was commissioned to do explicitly excluded consideration of the environmental evidence. Naturally if these sites were to be taken to publication, work would have to be carried out on the animal bones, the human skeleton from site 51 and any soil samples that may survive. The archive also makes reference to the preservation of wooden stakes in Site 42. If these survive it would be necessary to identify the species.

## 6.5 Overview

Once the work in steps 6.1-6.4 had been undertaken it would be possible to write an overview of the results of these excavations. This could be done in one of two ways.

- The focus could be kept narrowly to these sites with reference to Trench 10, the Time Team excavations and any evaluation / watching brief information from the area.
- The focus could be on Castleford as a whole including all of that information as well as the other sites published in *Castleford II*, interventions such as that in Bradley Street (Crockett and Fitzpatrick 1998). This would provide a more coherent account of what was going on at Castleford than is currently available. The opportunity could be taken to critically evaluate the conclusions presented in *Castleford I-III* in the light of what is now known. If this approach was taken, then the materials for writing a new popular guide to Castleford to replace Philip Abramson's *The Story of Roman Castleford* would be in place.

It is estimated that the first option would take approximately four weeks to produce. The latter option might take 8-10 weeks depending on the amount of information available from unpublished sites.

## 7 Publication options

There are three publication options for these sites. the first two assume the programme of work outlined above is carried out. The third is a worse case scenario.

- Publication as a monograph (*Castleford IV*) with the overview forming the final part. If the second option for reviewing all the evidence for Roman Castleford was pursued, a popular guide to the Roman town could be produced as a spin off. The pottery catalogues are likely to be very long. An option for dealing with these might be to include them on a CD to accompany the book, with the files lodged with the ADS to ensure proper curation and up-dating as required.
- Publication in print as a popular guide, with the overview as a journal article in a volume of *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* and the new evidence about pottery shop and the light it casts on pottery supply and marketing as another journal article, possibly *Britannia*. The full site reports to be made available as a web site, again lodged with the ADS to ensure curation.

- If no further work is carried out on this material it would still be possible to write a short article based on this review and place it in something like the *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*. This would at least have the merit of alerting people to the potential of the archive, and indicating what could be done, should resources ever become available.

The third option is naturally one that we would prefer not to have to pursue as the only publication option. If it is decided to proceed with the programme of analysis, and it becomes clear that the final report will only become available a number of years hence because of budgetary constraints; some consideration should be given to producing such an article as an interim statement.

The second option would save money on printing and distribution, but it should be noted that preparing the material for publication electronically requires just as much editorial input as preparing it for a print option and also the cost of lodging the files with the ADS will not be negligible. The journals might also need a publication subvention; they would certainly appreciate one. It should also be noted that electronic publication is still not ideal as far as site plans go, especially the ones that cover a large area as some of the ones for this part of Castleford will do.

We would prefer the first option which would be a combination of scholarly monograph with some of the data available electronically to facilitate further analysis, and the popular guide. We feel this would be the best way of making the information widely available to the different interested constituencies at appropriate levels.

## 8 References

### Abbreviations

*Castleford I* Cool, H.E.M. and Philo, C. (ed.) 1998. *Roman Castleford Excavations 1974-85. Volume I: the small finds* Yorkshire Archaeology 4 (Wakefield).

*Castleford II* Abramson, P., Berg, D.S., and Fossick, M.R. 1999. *Roman Castleford Excavations 1974-85. Volume II: the structural and environmental evidence* Yorkshire Archaeology 5 (Wakefield).

*Castleford III* Rush, P., Dickinson, B., Hartley, B., Hartley, K.F. 2000. *Roman Castleford Excavations 1974-85. Volume III: the pottery* Yorkshire Archaeology 6 (Wakefield).

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