

CISTERCIAN WARE KILN AT TICKNALL: NOTE ON 2006 EXCAVATIONS

By JANET SPAVOLD

and
SUE BROWN

During the summer of 2006, part of a kiln site for Cistercian wares was excavated at Church Lane, Ticknall, Derbyshire (SK 352239). Cistercian ware had been found the previous year, when a short emergency excavation had been carried out, but the opportunity arose to do more work on the site. We called on the Derbyshire Archaeological Society (DAS) Archaeology Section for help, and also Cistercian ware experts Anne Boyle, Jane Young and Ian Rowlandson from Lincolnshire Museums.

The new finds have added to our knowledge of this early modern pottery. The site was already known, as some sherds of later wares had been previously deposited in Derby Museum. With the permission of the site owners, Mr and Mrs Gray, excavation revealed a previously undisturbed waste tip under the garden. We found many large sherds from Cistercian wares and we have been able to reconstruct several complete or almost-complete pots. This is important as our previous finds of Cistercian ware in Ticknall have been fragments; most production sites reverted to agriculture when they were abandoned and the waste tips were ploughed, breaking up the pottery.

The majority of the finds were from saggars, plus some good, large undecorated water pitchers. The key finds were finely potted, well decorated Cistercian wares. This type of pottery was originally thought by archaeologists to have been made on monastic sites, but it is clear that Ticknall was a major supplier and that there were several sites making it here. Cistercian ware replaced wooden cups and mugs as the usual drinking vessels; it appeared from about 1450 and was fashionable for about a century.

The Church Lane Cistercian wares have different patterns and shapes from those of other Ticknall sites; the potters clearly worked to their own designs and it is becoming possible for archaeologists to identify patterns from particular sites. Some of the patterns and shapes found here can be matched to pottery found in the excavations at Austin Friars in Leicester; other patterns came from another Ticknall site. The Church Lane pots have dark bodies with appliqué patterns made from whiter clays, glazed with lead. This site made two-handled tygs or mugs, where other sites produced three-handled tygs. Decorative motifs are flowers and leaves, raspberry prunts, impressed dots of clay, and various cartwheel stamps. There is a face, similar to the German Bellarmine masks, on one and it may be the earliest English mask decoration found. The potter made at least one set of counters for draughts. In archaeological terms the finds are extremely significant, and add to the evidence of Ticknall's early importance.

The excavation revealed evidence of several waste pits which intercut each other. There was evidence of clay and sand being brought to the site. At the lowest level, the

earth had been burnt to a bright orange, with possible evidence of a kiln firehole, though we were not able to excavate the whole area. We await expert interpretation of the finds and site plans and sections.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to the DAS members who helped us to collect the evidence, to the Lincoln team for their advice, to Mr and Mrs Gray for their permission to dig, and to Ms Jacqui Kehoe and Mr T. de Blaquiére for their assistance.

REFERENCE

Spavold, J. and Brown, S. (2005) *Ticknall Pots and Potters* (available from the authors).