

Chapter 1 Medieval and Tudor moated mansion (Periods 2 and 3)

There are several non-ceramic finds from the fills of the small ditch-like moat ([220]) and later brick-built moat ([249]/[279]). Some objects may have been thrown into the moats by occupants of the mansion or visitors (a worn horseshoe, a broken spur) while others may have been lost (a wooden ball) or discarded with domestic rubbish. Most are relatively high-status dress-accessories or imported glass, reflecting the wealth of the Fennes and their successors who lived in the mansion in the late 15th and 16th centuries.

The lowest silts of the earlier ditch/moat ([218]) contained a piece of high domed base from a late 15th- or 16th-century imported Venetian glass goblet or tazza made from two thick layers of deep blue and clear glass enclosing a thin crizzled band of gold leaf (Fig 1 (Fig 2, <72>).

Fig 1, <80>). It is an extremely rare example of the Venetian glassmakers' Renaissance revival of the late Roman/Byzantine 'gold in glass' technique of trapping or 'sandwiching' gold leaf between two layers of clear and coloured glass, the heat sometimes 'causing the gold to disperse causing a curious abstract pattern' (Tait, H, 1979, 27 and 37 no. 24, pl 8) (I am grateful to Dr Rachel Tyson for her comments on this vessel). This once extremely valuable display object was found with fragments of light green window glass of a type commonly used in 15th- and 16th-century windows. Higher up in the silt ([217]) were more everyday items: a small narrow iron horseshoe with rectangular nail-holes, a twisted copper-alloy loop from a purse (cf Egan 1998, 64, fig 52), a copper-alloy tubular lace-chape still enclosing the end of a silk lace and an early to mid 16th-century Nuremberg 'Ship penny' jeton (token) which would have been used as a counter in calculations, games or gambling. These finds were found with ceramics dated 1550–75 and are likely to be the same date. A piece from another expensive piece of glass, an imported Venetian or Venetian-style clear glass vessel with a thick blue glass decorative trail was found in the upper silts [216] with ceramics dated 1600–10 (Fig 2, <72>).

Fig 1 Base fragment from a Venetian 'gold in glass' tazza or goblet

Fig 2 Fragments of Venetian or Venetian-style glass with trailed and *vetro a fili* decoration

The silts of the larger brick-built moat contained part of an iron rowel spur (Fig 3, <00>) and a copper-alloy dress-pin (Fig 4, <93>) from context ([276]) and a wooden bowling ball and a shoe-part from context [288]. The spur is late 15th- or 16th-century with a tapering curved side and a rowel-box with circular terminals (cf Clark 1995, Fig 97, 327–8; Egan 2005, 184). The dress pin has a large hollow domed head and short thick shank. It is a type used decoratively on hats or dress, particularly in the mid to late 16th century (Egan and Forsyth in Gaimster and Stamper 1997, 224). The low vamp (front section) from a round-toed shoe is early to mid 16th-century and decorated in a popular 16th-century style with parallel vertical cuts grouped in pairs (Fig 5, <124>). The ball (68mm from top to bottom) is made of willow and though now split and slightly distorted was originally oblate with slightly flattened faces (Fig 6, <122>). It was probably used for bowling (cf Morris, C 2000, 2358–9)

although it is slightly smaller than many published examples and could have been used in a variety of games.

A small group of glass beaker and goblet fragments and a flask rim (Fig 7, 102>, <105>, <104>) was found in the fill of a cesspit or trap associated with the mansion (contexts [250] and [251]). Three are bases from a distinctive type of tall pedestal beaker with decorative optic-blown vertical ribs (Willmott 2000, 47 Type 4.2). These were mid to late 16th-century English products, made from thin-walled natural green ‘forest’ or ‘potash’ glass and probably used for beer (Willmott *ibid*, 45). One base is from a more unusual form of English rod stem goblet (cf Willmott *ibid*, 73 15.1). The flask rim is also green English glass. Three small fragments from a more decorative imported vessel are made from colourless glass decorated with alternating horizontal opaque white glass trails and slightly raised opaque white and blue glass twisted bands (*vetro a fili* decoration). It is a high status vessel, possibly a pedestal beaker or a goblet, and almost certainly 16th-century Venetian (Willmott *ibid*, 16–17; 50, 4.10; 61, 10.5) (Fig 2, <106>).

Fig 3 Iron rowel spur from the brick-built moat

Fig 4 Sixteenth-century copper alloy dress pin

Fig 5 Part of a mid to late sixteenth-century shoe with slashed decoration

Fig 6 Sixteenth-century wooden bowling ball

Fig 7 Naturally-coloured English glass beaker and goblet bases and part of a flask

Chapter 2 Early 19th-century Baptist College etc (Period 4)

No reg finds (except pipes) – and a very residual late medieval jeton

Chapter 3 19th and 20th-century Stepney (Period 5)

This was a poor area of London by the 19th century and the small items found in the 19th-century wells and cesspits behind Garden Street are comparatively few and basic. The earliest are from well-fill [203]/[204], dated by ceramics to the first decade of the 19th century. The only personal items in this group are an intaglio brooch or locket, an artificial gemstone made from blue glass ‘paste’ and some brass and steel nutcrackers. The oval intaglio depicts the head of a garlanded classical figure engraved on banded orange carnelian set in a plain copper-alloy mount which has traces of gilding (Fig 8, <22>). It is quite crudely engraved and is probably an imitation of a more expensive cameo. The nutcracker is almost identical to ‘Nutcracks’ illustrated in the Birmingham Catalogue of Richard Timmins & Sons, published c 1845 but containing plates cut in the 1820’s (Walker, (ed) 1994, 134, nos.375, 380) (Fig 9, <61>). It is small (approx. 100mm long) and dual-purpose as one of its terminals is a conventional decorative acorn-shaped terminal (cf

Catalogue no. 380) while the other is a tobacco pipe-tamper. Otherwise there are some everyday dress-, leisure- and commercial or industry related items from this well-fill. Two plain bone buttons with central holes would originally been textile-covered and there is also a larger plain brass button, probably from a coat. Two finds, a white clay marble with traces of red paint ([204]) and a domino ([204]) are an indication of the games children and adults played (Fig 10, <36>, <37>). The small domino, just 21mm long, is made from bone and appears to be cheap or homemade with shallow impressions for dots which may have originally been painted or inlaid. Brass waste trimmings, crucible fragments and a small toothed wheel and spool (all from well [204]) provide evidence for workshops in the area. A pharmaceutical stopper and part of a small square clear glass ink bottle are the only glass finds and would probably have been used commercially in shops.

Fig 8 Carnelian intaglio brooch or locket from an early 19th-century well

Fig 9 Copper alloy (brass) and steel dual-purpose nutcrackers and pipe-tamper. The catalogue illustration is from the Birmingham Catalogue of Richard Timmins & Sons, 1845.

Fig 10 Early 19th-century clay marble and bone domino

Four pit fills ([190], [200], [262], [57]) are slightly later, dated by ceramics to the early to mid 19th century. They contain more table glass and small mass-produced ornamental items than the slightly earlier well fill [203]/[204], possibly reflecting the lower price and greater availability of consumer goods at this time. The lower part of a clear glass candlestick ([190]) and a complete plain circular salt (Fig 11, <126>, [57]) are both decorated with a cut glass star on the underside, a common Victorian glass decoration motif. Glass vessels and bottles include tumbler and wine or gin glass fragments ([262]), part of a panelled light blue glass medicine bottle and a complete light blue glass octagonal ink bottle (Fig 12, <145>, [57]). The other finds are household or personal items and include a small turned bone mount or box-lid with three rivet-holes [200], an ivory plug from the end of a knife-handle ([262]) and a well-preserved wooden scrubbing brush with its bristles still surviving Fig 13, <123>).

Fig 11 Early to mid 19th-century salt container, decorated with cut-glass star

Fig 12 Early to mid 19th-century octagonal ink bottle

Fig 13 Victorian scrubbing brush

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