

A New Delftware Shape

by G. J. DAWSON

In 'The Montague Close Delftware factory prior to 1969'¹ a group of material recovered when a hole was dug for an unexploded bomb east of Southwark Cathedral in 1947 was published. In the same article, a Spouted Pedestalled Vessel Type 2 was published, which was thought to have been an isolated find in 1911. It was subsequently discovered, however, that this in fact also belonged to the group found in 1947.²

The 'vase' that was actually found in 1911 (TQ 3272/8028) is now described and illustrated (No. 1). It is a type of vessel which is very rare and no other example appears to have been published from England.

No. 1 (Cuming Museum 58/2/42). This vessel is in a pink biscuit and has a hollow pedestal with a kicked base and two quarter-round mouldings on its edge. The body swells out so that its greatest girth is at the shoulder which itself is fairly flat leading to an everted neck. The rim does not survive. There are scars for two handles on the edge of the shoulder which are not exactly opposite each other. The diagnostic feature of this vessel, however, is the constriction around the middle of the body.

A very similar vessel in biscuit, No. 2, was also found in Southwark but no more precise provenance is known. It was in the Guildhall Museum collection³ but in 1959 was transferred to the Cuming Museum on permanent loan (C.M. 59/2). Its only difference from the first example is that it is slightly taller and the body is much narrower. It is impossible to say whether the edge of the pedestal base was moulded because it does not survive, but the base itself is flatter and has a spiral mark on it. Once again the rim does not survive but there are scars for two handles on the shoulder.

The third example, No. 3, was only found in 1973 and unlike the other two is glazed and decorated. Unfortunately it is an unstratified find from the northern part of Montague Close (TQ 3272/8036). It is smaller than the other two but in proportion is close to No. 2, though its base is like that of No. 1 (it has a moulded edge like No. 1 too but the glaze has obscured this in places). In this example, a little of the rim survives, which shows that it had a wavy edge, in one part at least. It appears to differ from the other two in only having one handle. It has a scar on the opposite side but this is too low to be the base of the handle (being on the side of the pot rather than on the shoulder), besides which, it would have obscured the decoration. There is part of the shoulder missing where a second handle could have been, but in that case the two handles would have been close together not nearly opposite as in the other two. The decoration is in three colours. The principal part, on the body, is in blue and comprises the initials 'IW'

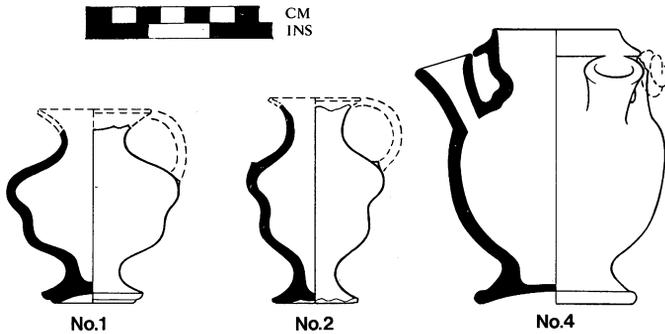
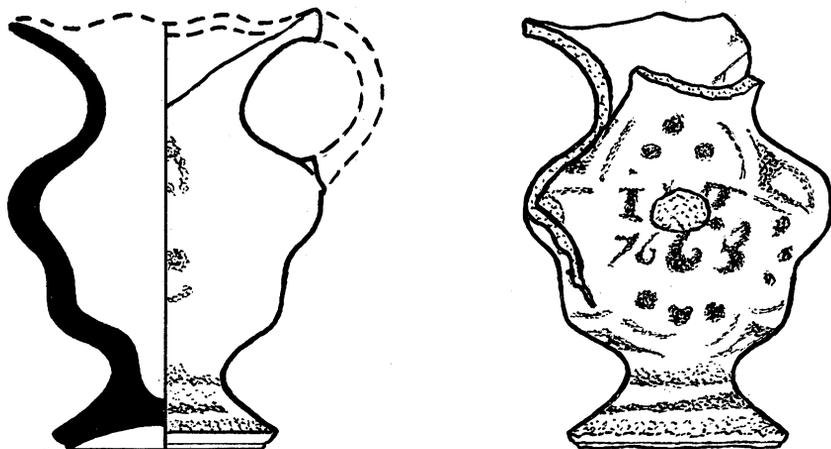


Fig. 1

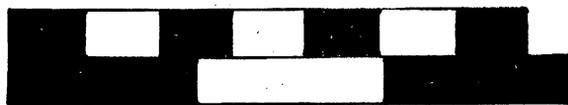
and 1663 below, surrounded by a symmetrical recurring pattern of three dots and a half-filled triangle with lines parallel to two of its sides. Round the stem of the pedestal is a blue band and below this an irregular band of purple and light green. The latter is also used in a band round the internal edge of the rim. Only part of the underside of the base is glazed.

The glazed example is the only one with firm dating evidence for this type, for even the fact that the others are delftware has been doubted and No. 2 was in fact attributed to the early 2nd century by the Guildhall Museum. Although it is rash to assume that the date on a pot is necessarily the date it was made, it seems safe to assume that No. 3 was made sometime in the middle of the seventeenth century and since the type is rare, which suggests a short life for it, the other two are probably of much the same date. Although No. 1 was an isolated find in 1911, it was found very close to the 1947 group and could well belong to it. Since this group has been dated independently to the mid-seventeenth century, these two suggestions support each other. There is no independent way of dating No. 2 at all. The fact that all the evidence points to this type being mid-seventeenth century in England is significant because the only parallel to the shape appears to be Italian and mid-eighteenth century.⁴ These are very similar in form to No. 2 but appear to lack handles. It is difficult to see how these are connected with the English examples, though the close similarity in form, but not in decoration, is perhaps unlikely to be due entirely to coincidence.

There can be little doubt that all three were made at the Montague Close factory since two were found in its immediate vicinity and the third could have been, and they are all wasters. With the two biscuit examples, this is obvious but the glazed example must also be a waster because its decoration has been ruined by another pot adhering to it in the kiln and this decoration was clearly one of the most important aspects of the pot which, with a date and an initial, must be commemorative. These features, and the fact that all three examples of this type are different, suggests that these are bespoke pots, one-off productions to special orders.



No.3



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Fig. 2

Since the Spouted Pedestalled Vessel Type 2 must now be included with the 1947 group, it can thereby be assigned to the same date as that group, that is the mid-seventeenth century. The Spouted Pedestalled Vessel Type 2 is much commoner than the constricted vase, but still rare compared with the common products of the delftware kilns. Two in fact have been illustrated. Garner published one in his book on *English Delftware*⁵ and Archer a second in the *Catalogue of the English Delftware Exhibition at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 1973* (No. 56). Interestingly, both are decorated in a very similar manner and must be the product of the same factory, if not the same painter. Note especially the identical decoration of the foot and pedestal. Yet though the shape is very similar, in one detail it is different, the latter example has a wavy rim while the former has a plain one. The latter, which is in the Fitzwilliam Museum, is also dated (1683) and has a set of initials. Another example in the Fitzwilliam Museum (Glaiser Catalogue No. 1314) is dated 1650, again with initials, but here, apart from a frame for these, there is no decoration.

However, these vessels are more common without any decoration at all. The example illustrated here (No. 4) is a chance find of 1865 from Moorfields (unnumbered in Cuming Collection). Besides this, there are two in the British Museum (E3 and another), one in the London Museum (A12200) and one has been published⁶ from Ingledew & Davenport (Southwark).

No. 4. The vessel is completely glazed except for the underneath of the base. It has a flaring kicked base, almost no pedestal, a squat globular body, a ridge at the base of the neck and a flange just below the rim. It has three spouts whose lips touch the flange and the stubs of three 'rams horn finials' one of which survives up to the flange (but oddly where one of the others would have touched the flange there is no scar).

The flange just below the rim on this example is not known to occur on any other vessel but certain of its characters can be detected elsewhere. Its squat globular body with no real pedestal and spouts rising up to touch the rim (or flange) recurs on the 1650 example in the Fitzwilliam, on an unglazed example in the British Museum (E4), and on the example from Ingledew & Davenport's where it is associated with an Alberello Type Container Type 3, a plate Type 1b and a pipe, all of which could date to c1650-70. There seems to be another type with a round globular body, a pedestal, and spouts stopping below the rim, and all these characters occur on the example illustrated by Garner, the 1683 example in the Fitzwilliam, an example from a plantation site at Somerville, South Carolina, where it must be before 1715 and on a biscuit example from Lambeth High Street which is almost certainly after c1670 (when delftware production in Lambeth starts) but probably not much after 1680. If these two types really are discrete, and the sample size is not very large, it would seem that the first group is earlier than the second. All the dating evidence given above would place the production of this vessel type in the period c. 1650-85. The fact that it does not occur in any of the later groups at Lambeth High Street or in any of the groups from Norfolk House, though a glazed 'ram's horn finial' from this type of vessel was found unstratified, or in any of the very large groups of c. 1730-50 from Montague Close must mean that its production did not go on long after c. 1680. In the absence of published groups from before 1650, it is less easy to be confident about that being its initial date.

The presence of biscuit examples at Lambeth High Street and St. Saviours 47 shows that at least two factories in London produced it. It is not known whether waster examples have been found in other cities, but that Archer attributes the 1683 example to London or Brislington would imply that they were made in Bristol too. The example from the St. Saviours group fits neither of the types exactly but has the squat globular body and lack of pedestal of the former though the spouts do not come up to the rim. Some characters seem to occur in both groups such as the wavy or plain rim and the ridge on the neck.

Acknowledgements

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References

1. Dawson, G. J. and Edwards, Rhoda. *Sy. A.S. Research Volume*, no. 1, 1974, 47-63
2. *Ibid.*, 63
3. Guildhall Museum, *Catalogue of London antiquities*, 1903, 92, no. 310
4. See the two vases published in 'Majolika' by the Kunstgewerbemuseum der Stadt Köln, 1966, 685, no. 352
5. Garner, F. H. and Archer, M. *English Delftware*, 1972, plate 43A
6. *Trans. London and Mdsx A.S.*, 23, pt. 1, 1971, fig. 8. 1