

EXCAVATIONS at Montague Close started in 1969 with an exploratory trench which revealed a 'semi-basement' which was then interpreted as a delftware kiln. Excavation in 1970 revealed that in fact it was only the stokehole of the kiln (Kiln 1) and a second kiln was also revealed nearby.

Kiln 1

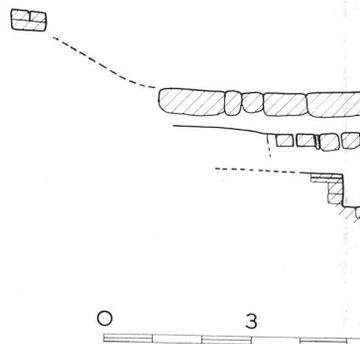
Period 1—This had been completely destroyed (except for one corner of its firebox) and no information could be recovered about its dimensions, internal fittings or structure. It is possible that its destruction is associated with a very deep layer of destruction debris of a medieval building which lay to the west of it, and which could be dated c.1640 on coin evidence. The destruction seems to have involved the almost complete destruction of the medieval priory building within which the Period 1 kiln had been built, and the west wall of this building could not be found to match the east wall found last year.

Period 2—This was a completely new structure, though severely mutilated by the period 3 structure and also by a late 18th or early 19th century cess pit. But it was clearly similar to kiln 2 and had a rectangular 'fire box' covered by a floor supported on arches of which very little survived. It had very wide east and north walls, and a very narrow flue through the former. Only one vertical flue could be proved, between the east wall and the first arch but there is little reason to doubt that it was constructed like kiln 2. At the moment, no phases for this period have been worked out, though some probably exist. The lower of the three floors in the 'stokehole' with two steps leading down to it belongs to this period, and a wall demarcating the north side of the stokehole was found.

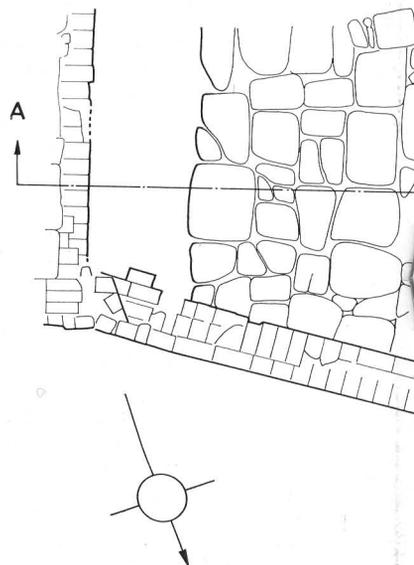
Period 3—At some time, probably before the end of the 17th century, this kiln (Period 2) was demolished to the lowest three courses of the arches and the whole filled in with a red sandy fill. On top of this, another kiln (Period 3) was built of which the two end walls survived quite high, one to nearly ground level. Fragments of the foundations of both side walls were also found. At least three and possibly four phases could be detected in this period. Within the 'firebox' were two or possibly three floors, built upon the infill of the Period 2 kiln. The end wall has also more than one period of building but these have not yet been correlated with the phases of Period 3, and some of them probably belong to Period 2. In the east wall there was a narrow flue which at some time had been blocked off at the stokehole end, possibly at the beginning of Phase 2 or 3. In the stokehole area, there are two floors, the lower belonging to Phase 1, and the second to Phase 2/3, and the stokehole area, which is rather larger than in Period 2, is defined by an oblique wall on

TWO DELFTWARE MONTAGUE CLOSE

Part 1



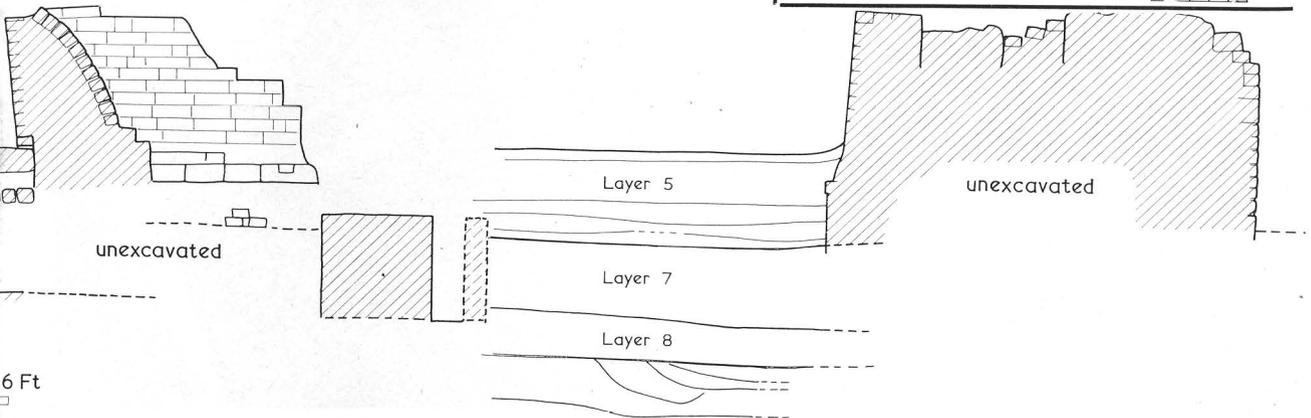
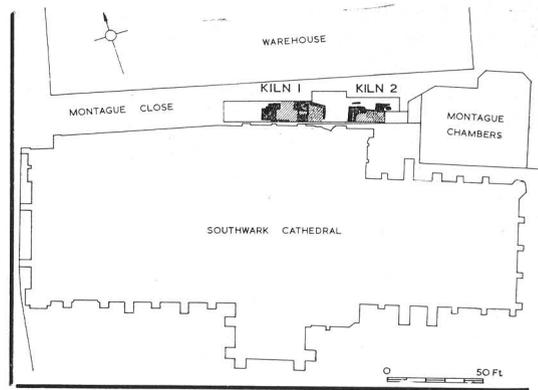
Kiln 1



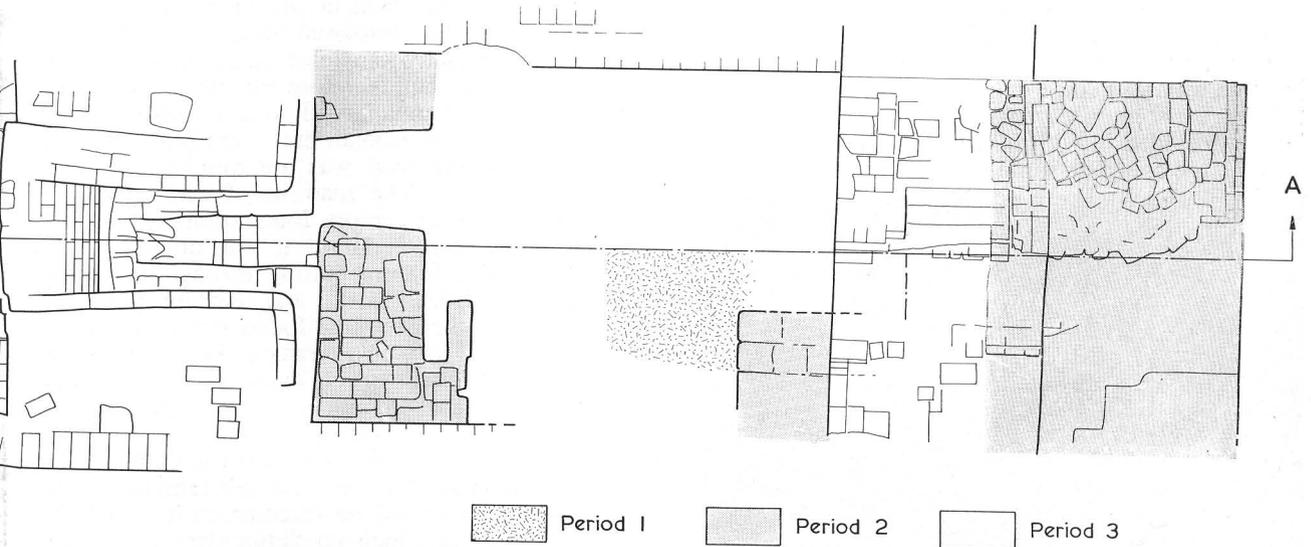
KILNS AT E, SOUTHWARK

GRAHAM DAWSON

*Photographs and drawings
by John Cresswell*



Section A - A

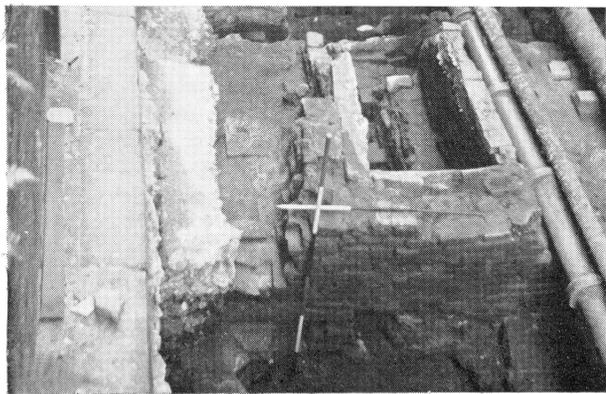


Plan

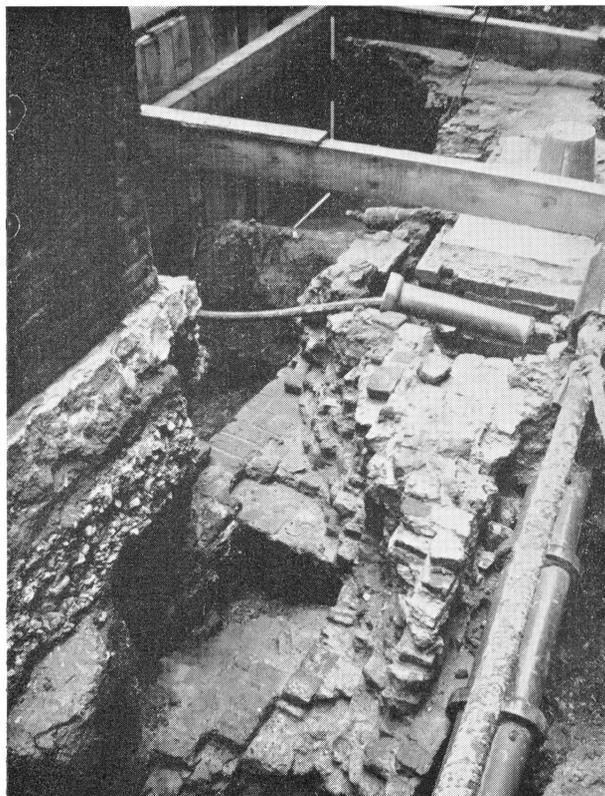
the north and a wall at right angles to the east wall on the south. No trace of arches were found but it is possible that the floors within the kiln had an arched floor for the potchamber over them and all trace has been destroyed (since it would have come above ground level). However, it does seem that in Phase 2/3 some drastic change took place in the way the kiln was fired, but the mechanics of it eludes us at the moment. At some time in the 18th century, the kiln was once again demolished and filled in with brick rubble, though there is evidence for a post kiln period within the structure before this.

Kiln 2

Although basically similar to kiln 1, at least in its second period, in detail there are a number of differences in kiln 2, which is also better preserved. Kiln 2 only has one period with two phases, though there are features which might belong to an earlier kiln. Basically it consisted of three independent arches with narrow vertical flues between each of them, and between them and the two end walls. One of these arches survived with its top still partially complete, and the springing of the second was also found, but the third had been destroyed in the second Phase and the end wall of the kiln thickened. The site of the flue from the stokehole was also found and its line was continued eastwards into the stokehole area by a wall. The stokehole area was not available for excavation but a wall defining its northern side was seen to be secondary. The west and north walls of the kiln were exceptionally wide. To the east of the kiln, but joined to it, were a number of brick features which were difficult to interpret, but which might be the relics of an earlier period of the kiln. Likewise, immediately to the north of kiln 1 a feature was discovered which had been intensely burnt and may be connected with the kiln in some way, but since only its east end was excavated, its exact nature remains uncertain. Both the kilns were filled in with fairly pure kiln dumps from which large complete samples were retained.



Kiln 1. Looking from east end; the period 3 flue can be seen in the foreground.



Kiln 2. Looking from east end; surviving "firebox" arch can be seen in the top middle of the picture.

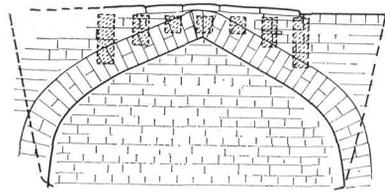
Other features.

The kilns took up most of the time available for excavation and also destroyed much of what preceded them, especially kiln 1, which cut down almost to natural. It was not therefore possible to find the west side of the Roman road, but a possible post pit and stone wall of Roman date were found, which do suggest that the road was not quite as wide as suggested last year. The road was found again, in the section of a 19th century foundation trench, but little more information about it was obtained. A minute part of a feature cutting through the road and filled with black earth and Roman pot was found to add to the post hole found last year, which it was suggested was post-Roman. Away from the road, a very thick layer of black silty earth was proved to overlie the Roman layers, which again only contained Roman pottery.

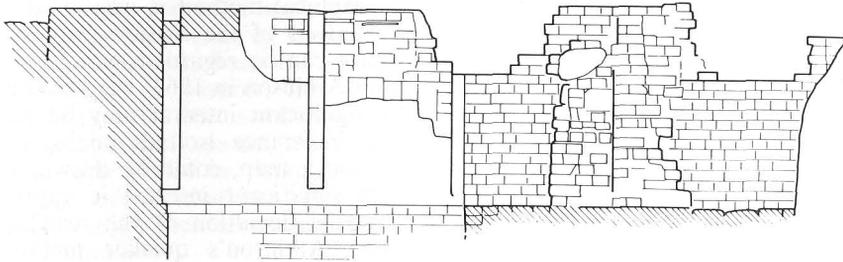
Thus the excavation of these kilns is still incomplete but it is clear that they are substantially similar to the kilns described by Piccolpasso in late 16th century Italy¹ from which no doubt they ultimately

1. Cipriano Piccolpasso, *Three Books of the Potters' Art* (c.1560) edited by B. Rackham and A. Van de Put (1934).

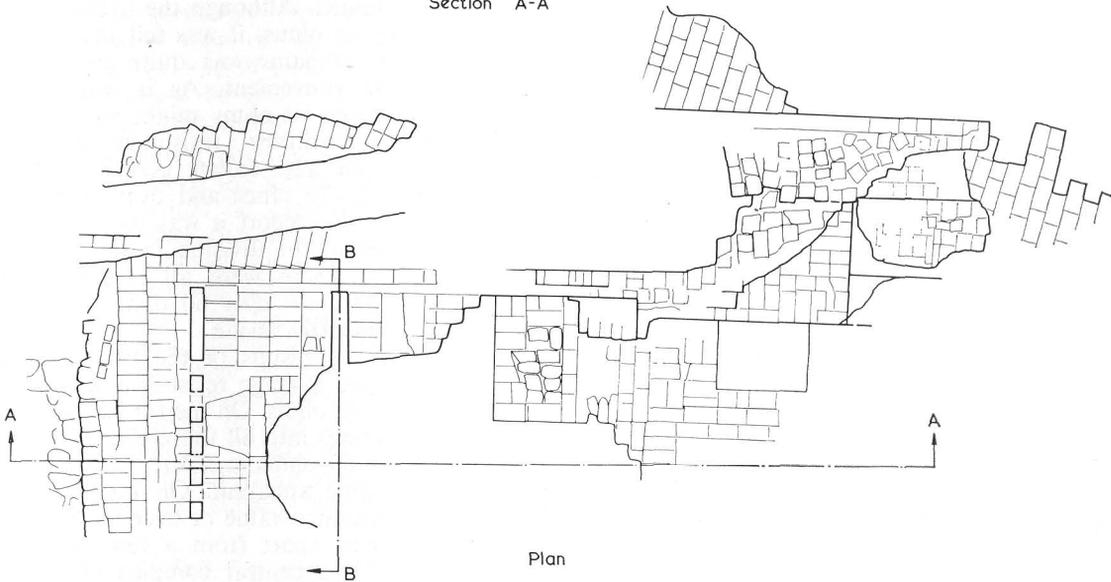
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View on B-B



Section A-A



Plan

Kiln 2.

derive. There are some differences, however, but in the absence of excavated Italian examples, it is impossible to say whether these are significant or whether Piccolpasso has engaged in a certain amount of artistic licence. This especially applies to the stokehole area for Piccolpasso shows no sign of any structure here at all. Oddly enough, the only other excavated tinglaze kiln apart from Norfolk House is in Spanish America and is completely and utterly different². What is needed now is the excavation of examples in Bristol, Liverpool and Holland to

see whether any consistent pattern emerges and whether there are any significant differences. It seems likely from the Montague Close excavation that towards the end of the factory's life, the old pattern, inherited, substantially unaltered it would seem, from Italy, was breaking up and this may be connected with industrialisation of the pottery industry which occurred at this time. But the outlines of this are very indistinct at the moment.

2. *In verbis*, Prof. Charles Fairbanks of Florida State University.