

A Group of Pottery Waster Material from Kingston

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IN THE REPORT on the medieval pottery kiln excavated in Eden Street, Kingston¹, Marion Hinton referred to the post-medieval red-ware pottery wasters recovered from her excavations to the rear of 15/17 High Street, Kingston in 1979 (Fig. 1) which were financed by Kingston Corporation in advance of an extension to the Guildhall. This report describes these wasters and may be compared to the red-ware products at Cheam reported on by C Orton².

The excavation consisted of a 3m (9ft) wide trench, behind 15 High Street, running for some 17m (50ft) at right angles to the High Street. Nearest to the street a mass of brickwork formed the base of a large, c 2m (6ft), diameter circular oven which had undergone many alterations in construction and plan. Provisional dating for this structure is of the late sixteenth century. Further east along the trench lengths of wattle-work, preserved in the waterlogged conditions below c 4.6m OD, and remains of small tree trunks and roots of poplar or willow were noted on a roughly NW-SE alignment. To the north of this line related sand and gravel deposits seemed to dive sharply downwards suggesting the edge of a stream with some revetment and undergrowth on its bank. The width of the trench was, however, insufficient to be certain of this. Stratigraphically separated from and below the oven complex were recovered a group of sherds exhibiting all the characteristics of waster pottery — warped and fused fragments both over and under fired with runs of glaze over broken edges. The group was heaped above and behind some of the wattling and extended into the south section and below the oven where the deposits were only sampled. Some 45 kg (100 lb) of pottery was recovered, representing a minimum of c 60 vessels, but it is not possible to estimate with accuracy what percentage of the original dump this may represent; material was noted continuing into the section in equal profusion so it may be assumed that at least half again remained. No evidence of kiln structure, in situ or as debris

apart from a few roof tiles with runs of glaze, was evident but the sherds were compacted together in a limited area and it is suggested that they form part of a dump from a kiln in the immediate proximity. In view of the likelihood of a stream to the north the kiln may probably have been just a few metres to the west in the rear of 17 High Street. A surprising number of near complete vessels have been reconstructed and full profiles for many of the forms are fairly certain.

Fabric and techniques

The colour of the pottery, Figs. 2-4, as is usual with waster material, varies considerably but generally it is a reddish-brown, typical of an oxidised iron content clay, with underfired examples being lighter and overfired darker. This insignificance of surface colour is underlined when considering more complete vessels, from elsewhere in non-kiln contexts, which often show considerable colour variations on the "finished product". A particular example from 1 Thames Street, Kingston³ being a large two-handed pitcher virtually identical to this waster material, particularly no. 7, and varying from a bright orange-red to a dark grey on either side. The High Street material is generally oxidised right through but on some larger, thicker walled forms there is a tendency for a dark core to remain. Equally on the more heavily glazed cooking pots a darker colouring of fabric prevails where it has been protected to a certain extent by the glaze. Glaze is applied variably both inside and out to cooking pots and some bowls but only sparsely to other forms. The clay is fired fairly hard, contains limited amounts of sandy inclusions and has only a slightly sandy texture. Many pots, especially the larger vessel types, show fettling marks round the basal angles. Most of the standing vessels, other than some cooking pots with pulled tripod feet, have small thumb feet in four groups although one base has three groups though of much larger thumbings.

Decoration is limited and apart from only half

1. Marion Hinton 'Medieval Pottery from a Kiln Site at Kingston upon Thames' *London Archaeol* 3 No 14 (1980), 377-83.
2. Clive Orton 'Medieval Pottery from a Kiln Site at Cheam: Part 2' *London Archaeol* 3 No 13 (1979),

355-9.

3. Excavation 1972, report forthcoming S Nelson (Kingston Museum ER 9).
4. Graham Dawson 'Excavations at Guy's Hospital, 1967' *Res Vol Surrey Archaeol Soc* 7 (1979), 27-65.

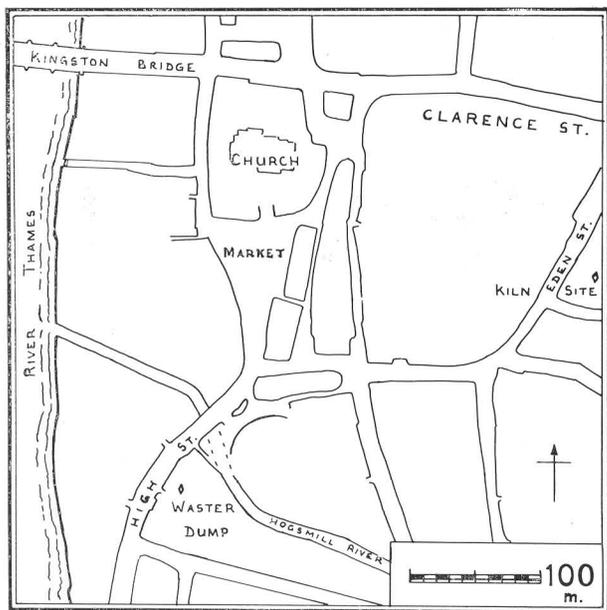


Fig. 1: Location map.

a dozen jug sherds showing white-painted lines (no. 5) and two examples of applied rosettes (no. 7) it is confined to an overall white slip, showing yellow under the glaze, on the inside of bowls (nos 13-15) and the outer surface of a jar (no. 16). The large open wall-sided bowls (no. 14) are particularly common finds in the London area especially with an internal white slip showing yellow. Amongst the pottery from Guy's Hospital⁴ this type was provisionally termed "Guy's Ware". The only other form of decoration is the unique sgraffito representation of a pigeon on the over-fired base of a bowl (no. 17) and the leaf motif on the vase (no. 24).

Jugs and pitchers

These vessels make up by far the largest proportion of the overall products — about 50%. There are two basic types, (I) bung-hole pitchers with a squared, flat-topped rim and single strap handle and (II) jugs with expanded triangular shaped rims and single rod handles. The two types seem to occur in roughly equal proportions and both come in large and smaller size. For the bung-hole pitchers this appears to be 2 gals (9l) and 1½ gals (4.7l) and for jugs 2 gal (9l) and 6pt (3.4l). The jugs differ slightly in detail, both with and without lips and a single variant (no. 4) has a flattened triangular rim. The lid-seated form (no. 2) may be from a pitcher as may also be the large vessel with applied rosette (no. 7), this last vessel is unusually large and may

well have had two opposed handles. On the pitchers the bung-holes are fairly even rings of clay applied and moulded round a smooth pierced hole set about 40mm (1½ins) above the base. The strap handles are ridged with a thumb impression on the join at both rim and body. The jug rod handles by contrast are luted smoothly onto the rim and body. White painting is rare and seems to occur solely on jugs (no. 5) although no. 2 does also show slight traces.

Cooking pots

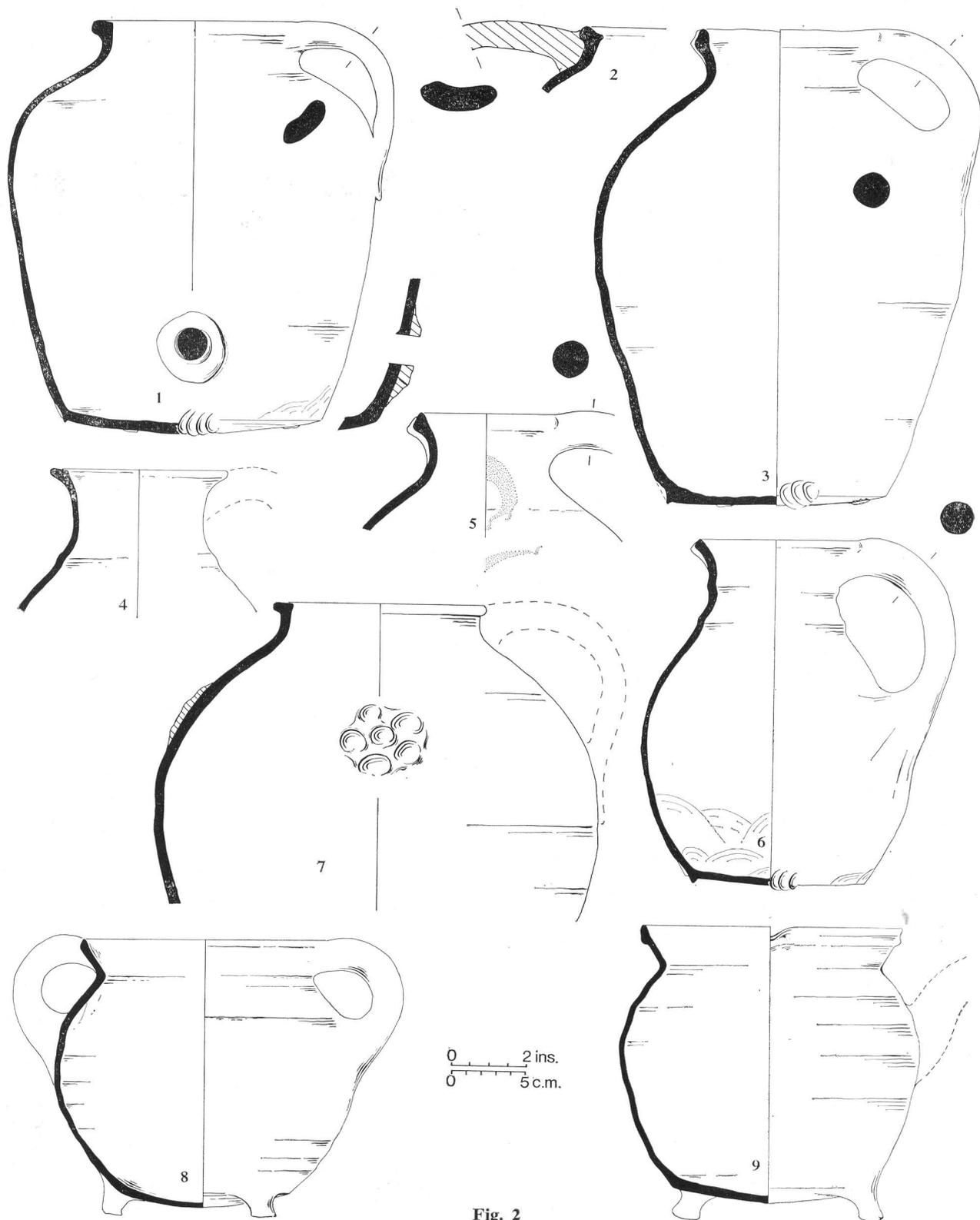
The next most common vessel forms are the two basic types of cooking pot, (I) the two-handled cauldron type and (II) the single handled pipkin. The cauldron type (no. 8) with two opposed rod handles and no lip is the most common with apparently both thumbed and pulled tripod feet. There is only one example of the pipkin form, with straight-out handle and lip at right angles (no. 9) and there is one near complete pot with no handles and variant squared, flat flanged rim (no. 10). The type I cauldron shaped cooking pots often exhibit a marked ridge round the shoulder and with their heavy green glaze and sharply everted rim, imitation of the metal form is apparent. There are three sizes of type I cooking pot with capacities of approx. 3,6, and 8 pts.

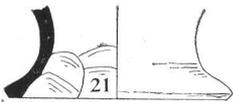
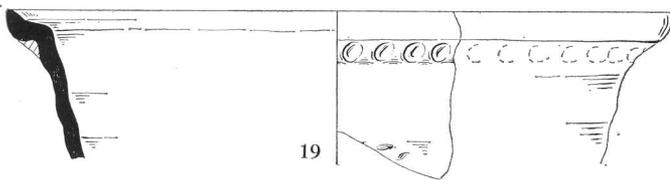
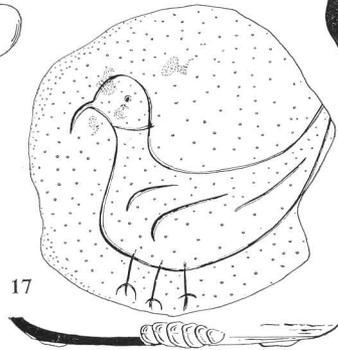
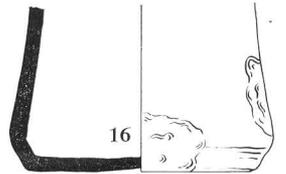
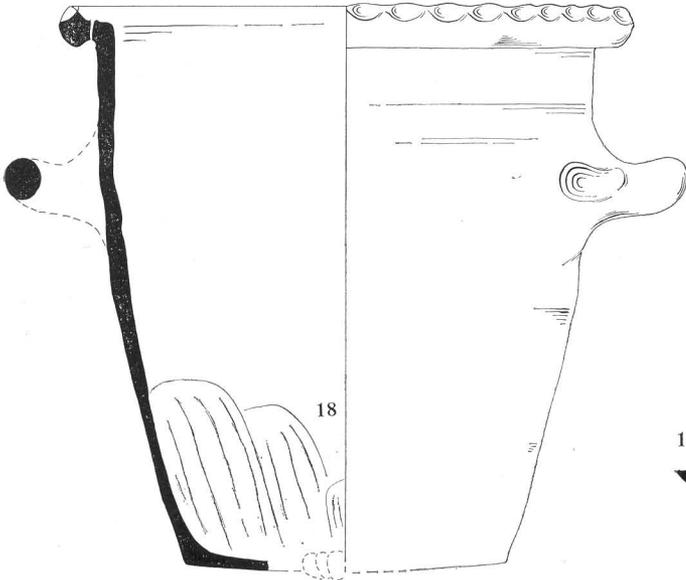
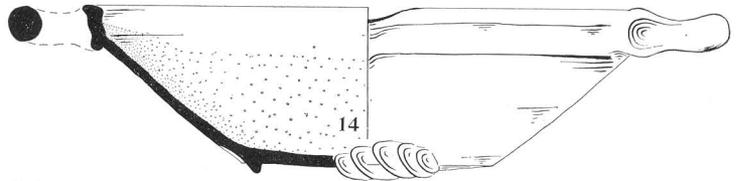
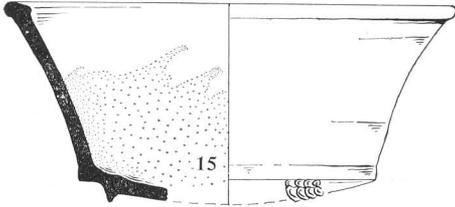
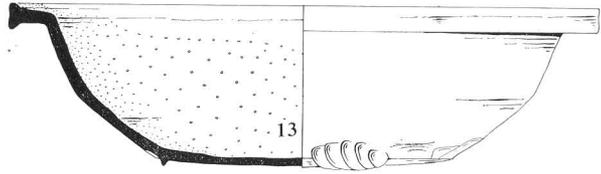
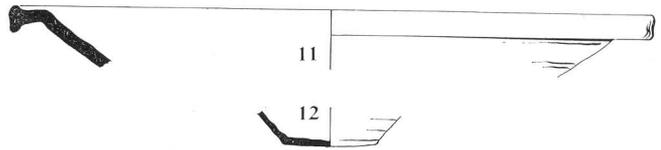
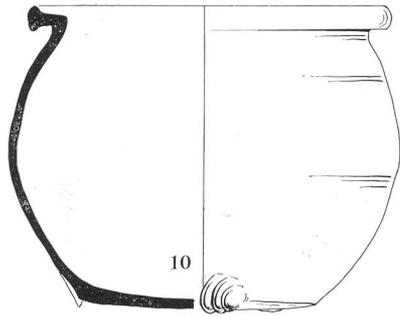
Bowls and dishes

Just as common as cooking pots are bowls and dishes but in a wider range of forms. There are wide, shallow open bowls (no. 11) and a very small dish glazed internally (no. 12) both relatively uncommon within the class. There are also deep dishes (no. 13), wall-sided pans with lateral handles (no. 14), an unusual straight sided bowl (no. 15) and one odd upright, almost albarello shaped form (no. 16), which might just possibly have had feet and a handle. It is these last vessels (nos 13-17) only that exhibit the internal white slip showing yellow under the glaze. The unique sgraffito decoration (no. 17) is presumably on an open bowl. A number of vessels exhibit this overall white slip perhaps something approaching 14% of the total.

Jars

There are two examples of tall, straight sided jars of open form (nos. 18 and 19). One very tall with probably two lateral handles on the body and another has a thumbed applied strip strengthening the rim. No. 18 is unglazed and very thickly potted with heavy fettling marks both inside and out on the base. No. 19 shows some evidence of glaze and possibly some incised motif on one side.





0 2 ins.
0 5 c.m.

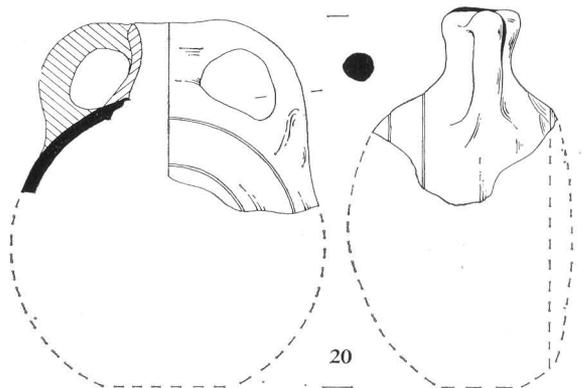


Fig. 3

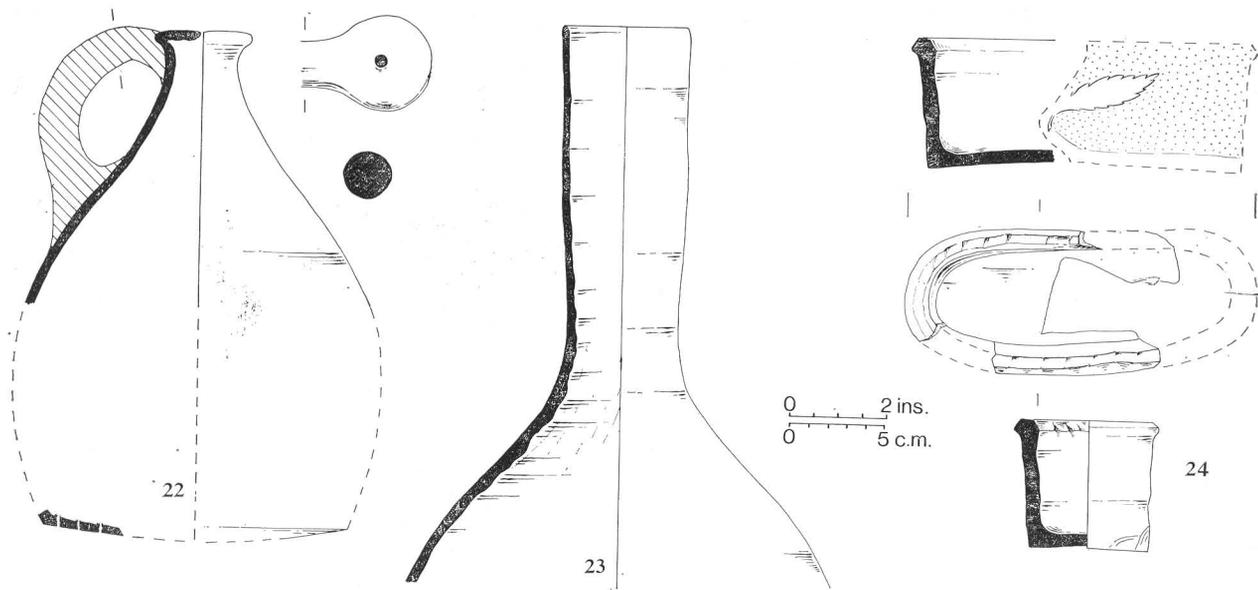


Fig. 4

Costrels

This distinctive class of mammiform, two handled costrel (no. 20) is represented by at least three identical vessels. They have one flattened and one domed side, incised with concentric grooves, and a neck and two handles applied to a pierced hole.

Other Forms

Single examples occurred of other forms. One base and possible knob of a chafing dish (no. 21) is a form surprisingly rare. The watering pot (no. 22) has a bib of glaze opposite the handle and is of the sprinkler type, filled by immersion in water as opposed to the alternative form with a spout and rose. They have often been described as utensils for settling dust on floors but contemporary illustrations, when they occur, show the type in use in gardens⁵ and a seventeenth century gardening manual also refers to this particular form⁶. The very large bottle neck (no. 23) is unusual and clearly representative of a class of industrial vessels possibly connected with the distilling process. There are also two thick round base sherds which may come from the lower half of this vessel.

There are published examples from London⁷ and recently many vessels of this shape were found amongst material connected with assaying work in the Tower of London⁸. The oval trough-like vessel (no. 24) built from slabs of clay heavily knifed trimmed and with a sgraffito leaf (? elder) design is a not uncommon find in the south east where examples are known in both white and red fabrics⁹. There are a number in the Museum of London, some with a second attached compartment; their function is enigmatic but a similar Museum example has a floral (? tulip) sgraffito decoration on one side and a simple identification for this shape as a flower vase may well be correct.

Dating

There was, usefully, some extraneous material recovered with the pottery wasters for which it is possible to suggest some general idea of dating. A few sherds of imported German stoneware occurred and, though fragmentary, would appear to be of Raeren drinking mugs and a jug from Aachen, imports typical of the late fifteenth century and first half of the sixteenth century. There were also several small sherds of medieval white

5. Late medieval tapestries in the Palais de Chaillot and Cluny Museums, Paris appear to show representations of these vessels in a garden scene.
6. *The Florists Vade Mecum*, 1683.
7. S Moorhouse 'Medieval Distilling Apparatus of Glass and Pottery' *Medieval Archaeol* 16 (1972), 79-122.

8. DOE excavations in Legges Mount, *pers comm* G Parnell.
9. J Haslam in 'Excavations on the site of Arundel House, Strand. 1972' *Trans London and Middlesex Archaeol Soc* 26 (1975), 227, and S Moorhouse 'Finds from Basing House, Pt I' *Post-Medieval Archaeol* 4 (1970), 50-1.

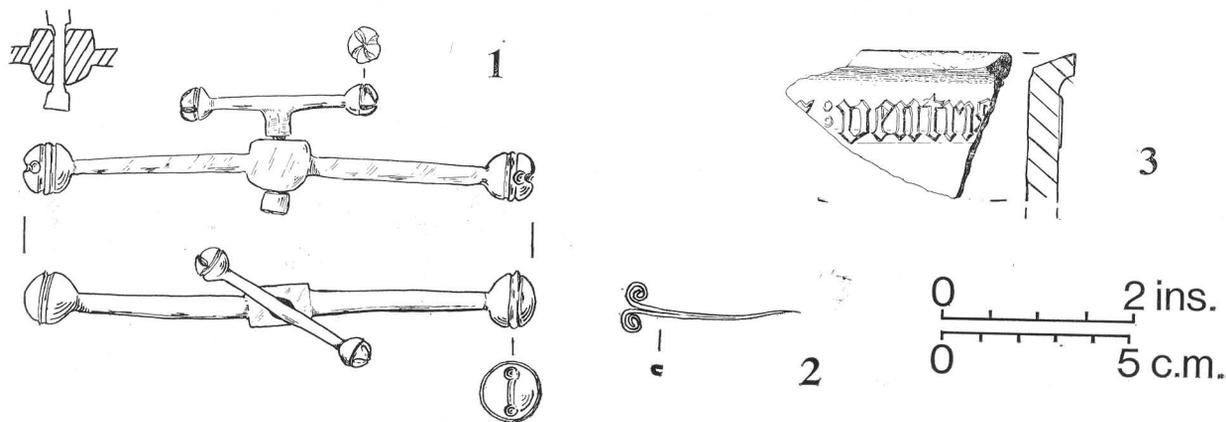


Fig. 5

wares, not unlike the early Cheam products, and fragments of Tudor Green type cups. Two bronze objects were recovered, one being a purse hanger bar (Fig. 5, no. 1). It is of medium length, 132mm ($5\frac{1}{4}$ ins), with decorated terminals and would appear to be similar to type B3, in the London Museum Catalogue and of late medieval date perhaps first quarter of sixteenth century. The other metal object (Fig. 5, no. 2), a short bronze pin with split and curled terminal end is not really diagnostic.

Also quite significant was a small fragment of white pipeclay (Fig. 5, no. 3) bearing an inscription in gothic black-lettering. The fragment is too small to interpret the inscription which seems in part to read — . . . r : ventris . . . and it is difficult to suggest what function the object would perform. At first glance a mould would seem possible perhaps for a large flat product but as a direct mould it is of course not a proper matrix, the letters not being reversed. If however, as seems more likely, the object is the finished product it might just be a small wall plaque, possibly religious, for a church. The style of the script displays a strong late fifteenth or early sixteenth century appearance. Its occurrence within the group of pottery wasters may be significant suggesting the possible supply and use of pipeclay by the potters.

Although it is unwise to draw conclusions from small amounts of material, on balance a date between the late fifteenth — early sixteenth century would seem suggested. There were no later sixteenth century German stonewares but definition of an end bracket date for this group is difficult to define. This is a general problem in that whereas there are many early sixteenth cen-

tury groups recognised, especially from Dissolution levels on religious sites, there are relatively few later sixteenth century groups available. There were a number of layers sealing the group all of sixteenth century date, with no clay tobacco pipes, so a date early within the century would seem probable. The whole assemblage is surprisingly similar to other late medieval red-ware groups especially those from Cheam and Woolwich and Clive Orton has drawn attention to the difficulty in distinguishing between them on visual examination of the fabric alone. No great attempt has yet been made to find parallels excavated elsewhere nor has any fabric analysis been compared to the Cheam fabrics. There seems a slightly greater use of glaze than at Cheam and there is a higher percentage of white slipped vessels. Some of the moulded rim forms also appear a little more developed and the jar (no. 18) seems surprisingly late in form. A date very slightly later than that for Cheam may be indicated.

Discussion

The change in forms between this group and the Eden Street kiln with its essentially medieval repertoire of jugs and cooking pots is most marked, more so than between the two phases at Cheam, but as C. Orton has indicated¹⁰ the Eden Street products are probably earlier than hitherto supposed, i.e. early fourteenth century, and there is thus quite a gap of some two hundred years in the latter part of which the transition to a post-medieval industry took place. The introduction at this time of a greater range of forms has been noted and although G. Dawson has argued recently¹¹ that the influence from the continent in the late fifteenth century is not so direct as has

10. C. Orton 'The Excavation of a Late Medieval/ Transitional Pottery Kiln at Cheam, Surrey' *Surrey*

Archaeol Collect 73, forthcoming.

11. G. Dawson op cit fn 4 (microfiche).

been thought, a similarity in shape for many new forms is evident. The sgraffito decoration on the bowl (no. 17) and the vase (no. 24) seem linked with Dutch sgraffito decoration, also on white slip, of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. There are, especially, two plates from Rotterdam and Middleburg¹² depicting pigeon-like birds which even show a very similar "ring" neck. Sgraffito decoration is relatively rare on English pottery at this time and when it does occur it is often on vessels very akin in shape to Dutch types¹³.

The jug forms, very different to the taller medieval shapes, once they are developed change very little in the post-medieval period — groups of the coarsewares from the abandonment phases at Nonsuch Palace¹⁴ are surprisingly similar in general shape. As at Cheam and Woolwich there are no cup forms and this has been noted elsewhere

12. J G N Renaud 'Laat-middeleeuws aardewerk met ornament in sgraffito' *Berichten Rijksdienst Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek* 9 (1959), 225-37.

13. A bowl similar to no 13 was recovered from a pit on the Tannery site, Kingston (ER 14) with an

in red-ware kiln sites in southern England; even further afield at Fulmodeston in Norfolk¹⁵, of the two sixteenth century phases of red-ware production it is only in the second that there is a small range of tankard types. In East Anglia, unlike Surrey, there is no equivalent centre producing fine forms so the development of cup types in red wares presumably occurs earlier.

Acknowledgement must go to Kingston Corporation for arranging and financing the excavation and particularly to Marion Hinton for discussing details of her work on the site. I must also thank the volunteer workers at the Museum's processing centre (St Phillips, Chessington) who worked on the pottery and especially to Margaret Hall for her sorting and reconstruction of so much of the material. The finds and records are in the care of Kingston Museum (Code KS 79: ER 20).

apparently late fifteenth century group.

14. M Biddle 'Nonsuch Palace 1959/60 — Interim report' *Surrey Archaeol Collect* 58 (1961), 1-20.

15. P Wade-Martins 'Sixteenth Century Pottery from Fulmodeston' *East Anglian Archaeol* forthcoming.

Letters

TURTLES TURNED

THE ARTICLE by Messrs. Armitage and McCarthy (*L.A.* 4 No. 1, 8), stemming from turtle remain found in a well below Leadenhall Buildings, provides a good springboard for further research. They could not in such an article fully excavate the 'information well' and in their review of the history of the turtle trade in the late 18th and 19th century London the first half of the 19th century was virtually passed over and we were hurtled into the ease of distribution of turtle products when canning became widespread in the second half of the century. The purpose of this note is to indicate one line of evidence for the use of stoneware packaging in this field from at least 1840.

In the Vauxhall Pottery excavation (1977-81) by The Southwark & Lambeth Archaeological Society a northward factory extension built by Alfred Singer (c. 1835 - 1865) was rebuilt about 1851, and this involved the backfilling of a cellar-like area with roughly 12-15 tons of stoneware waste, of which some 5-6 tons were excavated. Among the many vessel types present was a series of simple straight sided jars with full width rims grooved below, and for convenience called 'drug jars.' These jars came in sizes ranging from a few ounces up to 1, 2 & 3 pint and larger capacities. In the versions with a groove below the rim a flexible cover would have been tied over the top, but in later types without the groove a stoneware lid was provided (e.g. Crosse & Blackwell). Of the many customer stamps some were found on these 'drug jars' and indicated use for drugs (human and

vetinary), salt, cheese, confections, and probably pickles (Crosse & Blackwell). In addition three stamps had a turtle context.

According to Directory evidence, a little way up Leadenhall St. at No. 129, P. Whitlock occupied the Ship Tavern up to 1839, and then George Painter took over in 1840 renaming the tavern 'The Ship & Turtle' which became famous for the live turtles kept in the cellars. Between 1869 and 1873 his presumed sons, Charles and Adolphus took over the establishment. The Vauxhall material shows the 'Geo. Painter, Ship & Turtle . . .' stamp, and in the Museum of London Reserve Store there are two examples (not Vauxhall made) stamped 'C & A Painter, Purveyors to HRH The Prince of Wales, Ship & Turtle Tavern, 130 Leadenhall St' (Accession No. 25894 and 'Upchurch Marshes'). A second Vauxhall stamp gives 'W. Mabey & Co., 38 New Bond Street' on some of these jars. William Mabey appears in business at Lloyds Coffee House in 1846, and by 1851 also has premises at 38 New Bond Street where the company is styled as Turtle Dressers & Dealers, and also as Confectioners. A third, fragmentary sherd, not fully interpreted is believed to read, after a personal name, '(Selle)r OR (Maste)r of Turtle, (? to) (Th)e Queen, (New) Bond Street, London'. A purchased jar of similar type in the authors' possession is stamped 'Ring & Brymer, Birch's, 15 Cornhill' and following the citation in the article (Ref. 14) this must be post 1836.

In the case of the tavern(s) it seems unlikely that alcohol would have been sold in these jars, and it can reasonably be assumed that turtle products were packed in them. There must be abundant evidence elsewhere to fill out the trade and distribution pattern. The few items above arose from routine search for dating evidence at the Vauxhall site.

ROY EDWARDS