
Cambridge College Ceramics c. 1760–1900: a brief overview

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From the 1760s onwards Cambridge colleges have used plates and other ceramics marked with the name or badge/coat of arms of the college, or the name of the college cook. This paper presents an overview of this material, in particular highlighting archaeological discoveries since 1990. Some issues that are addressed include the reasons for marking these ceramics, intra and inter collegiate variation, change over time and how Cambridge differed from Oxford.

Introduction

Although there have been numerous archaeological excavations in Cambridge, there is little reliable evidence for a distinctive material culture 'signature' associated with the colleges of the university prior to the mid-18th century. Whilst investigations on college sites have revealed items that it is tempting to link to a medieval or post-medieval collegiate lifestyle, such as bone tuning pegs and copper-alloy book clasps, near identical items are found at both 'town' and 'gown' sites. Whilst such items may be more common in collegiate contexts, the difference is marginal. Similarly the ceramics recovered at collegiate and non-collegiate sites are of similar form and fabric, with only minor apparent differences such as moderately higher proportions of ceramic lamps in the medieval period and drinking vessels in the post-medieval period at college sites. It is extremely difficult from the material culture to differentiate medieval and post-medieval 'town' and 'gown' sites, or frequently even to recognise that Cambridge had a large collegiate population. The situation changes markedly in the mid-18th century, with the appearance of significant quantities of ceramics that can be readily associated with colleges.

Dining at a Cambridge college today almost invariably involves the use of relatively plain plates and other ceramics marked with the name or badge/coat of arms of the college. The use of such ceramics goes back around two hundred and fifty years to the mid-18th century and a combination of evidence from archaeological investigations, surviving items in museum, college and private collections and documentary evidence can be used to understand how this usage has developed over time. Whilst there has been

some study of surviving collegiate ceramics (principally Stovin 1999), our understanding of this material has been revolutionised by developer-funded archaeology since 1990 (Fig. 1). Whilst some assemblages have been published (Cessford 2008; Cessford 2012a; Cessford 2013; Cessford 2014a; Cessford 2014b), most discoveries which involve only one or two collegiate pieces do not merit individual publication and publication on a case-by-case basis does not allow for a synthetic overview.

Perceptions of dining at college often focus upon expensive and unusual tableware. Silver was used relatively frequently until the mid-19th century and included 'great plate' for ceremonial use, chapel vessels, 'buttery plate' used at ordinary dinners, plate associated with the master and plate loaned to fellows in their rooms (Rackham 2002, 19–31). There were also more exotic items; including silver mounted aurochs horn, coconut shell and ostrich shell drinking vessels (Rackham 2002, 33–51, 88–93). More prosaically, the mainstays of college dining in the mid-18th century were pewter and wood. Unfortunately these rarely survive; the relatively cheap wooden items have decayed or were used as firewood, whilst the valuable pewter has been melted down for re-use (Fig. 2).

Cambridge Collegiate Ceramics c. 1760–1900

Cambridge colleges were relatively late adopters of ceramic tableware. British aristocratic families, members of which formed a significant proportion of the collegiate population, and other institutions were commonly using Chinese porcelain with armorial designs from the early 18th century onwards (Howard 1974; Howard 2003), but there is no evidence of colleges commissioning services. Archaeological evidence indicates that ceramic plates probably began to be utilised by colleges c. 1730–50, but the introduction of marked vessels dates to the 1760s. Marking was widespread by c. 1800 and had been adopted by all colleges by the 1840s. The marking took a wide range of forms, including both the names and heraldic badges/coats of arms of the colleges. Until the 1870s ceramics were also frequently marked with the names of college cooks, who were semi-independent

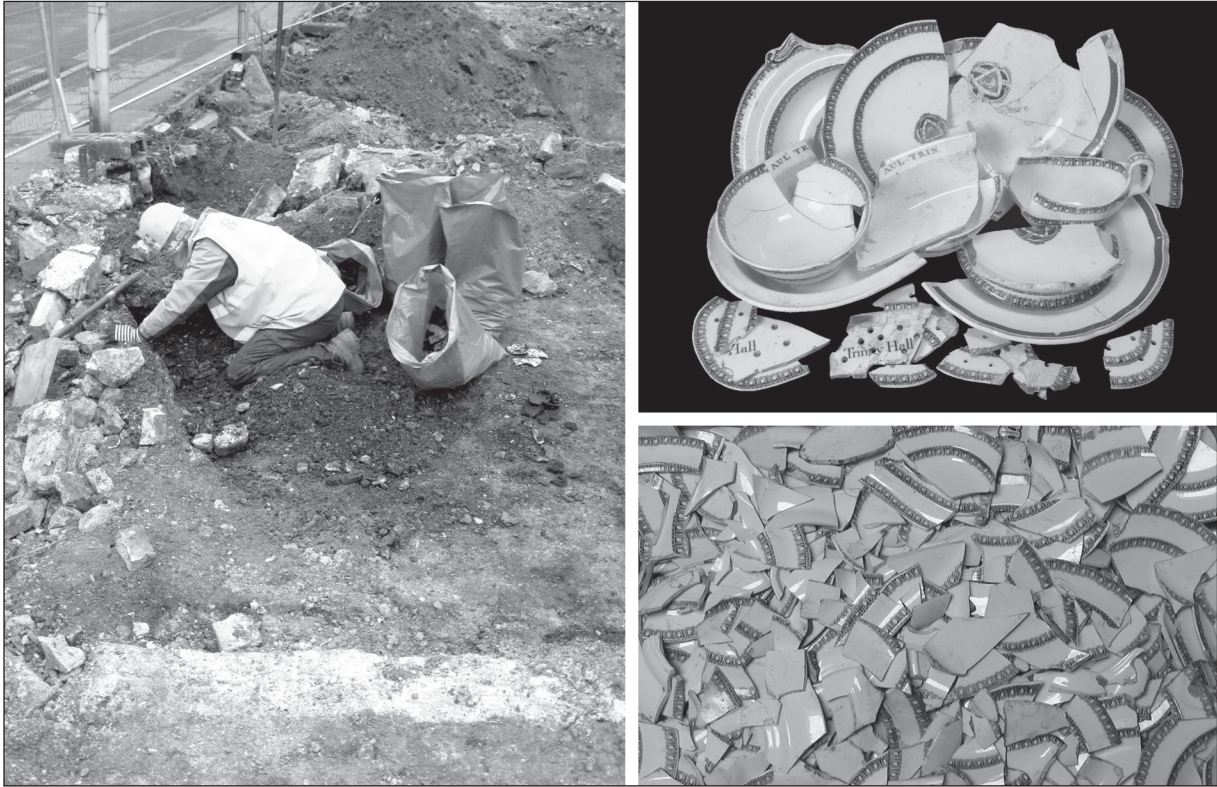


Figure 1. The recovery of a large assemblage of mid-19th century Trinity Hall whiteware at an excavation on Newmarket Road and views of parts of the assemblage.

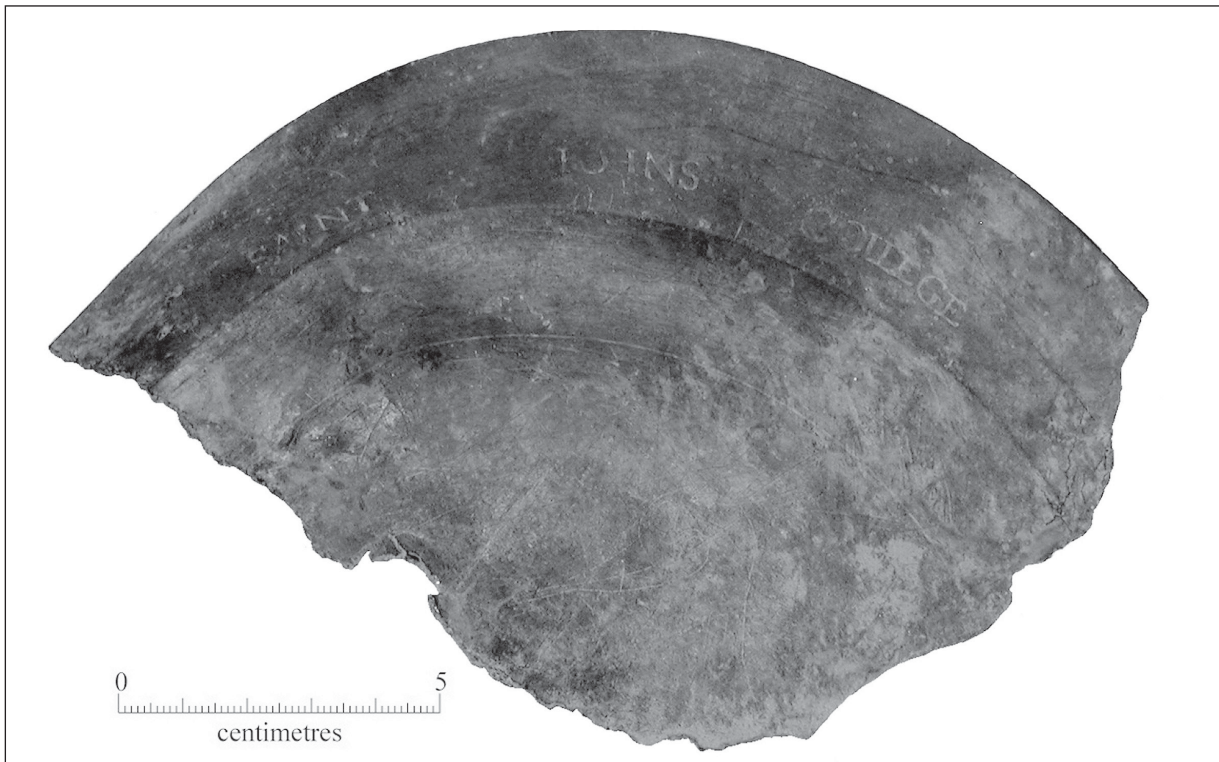


Figure 2. Fragment of 18th- or early 19th-century pewter plate marked Saint Iohns College (by permission of the Master and Fellows of St John's College, Cambridge).

entrepreneurial businessmen whose responsibilities often included supplying crockery which remained their own property. Although a range of techniques were used to mark vessels these all took place during the manufacturing process in Stoke-on-Trent, rather than being added later as some ownership marks of the period were.

The earliest known marked collegiate ceramic is a Staffordshire-type white salt-glazed stoneware plate of c. 1765–70 with bead and reel rim decoration and the moulded text 'Bartholomew Fuller of Trinity College Cambridge', discovered during building work at Trinity in 1908 (Rackham 1935, 83, no.552) (Fig. 3). Vessels such as this with moulded names are relatively expensive to produce, as they require the creation of a specific mould, and this is the only known collegiate example. Determining much detail concerning Bartholomew Fuller is problematic, as until 1767 there were two college cooks with this name, the other being employed at Jesus. We do, however, know that the Bartholomew Fuller of Trinity was a common councilman of the town corporation, leased land at Little Wilbraham in 1763 and 1769, took on an apprentice in 1768 and died in 1770. The inspiration for the creation of the earliest marked collegiate ceramics is unclear, various commercial establishments in Cambridge frequented by students and fellows such as inns and coffeehouses began using marked ceramics in the 1750s (Cessford *et al.* in preparation) so they would already have been familiar with them.

The practice of marking plates spread relatively rapidly and by c. 1770–90 several colleges were using

ceramics marked with either the name of the college (Gonville and Caius, Trinity Hall) or its cook (Emmanuel, St John's, Trinity). These were generally relatively plain creamware plates, although a few other vessel types were also marked, with limited moulded decoration on the rims and the names of the colleges or cooks on the underside (Fig. 4). There is no evidence that colleges were using wares marked with their badges/coats of arms, but it is clear that by this time such wares were increasingly being produced in Staffordshire. In 1766 Josiah Wedgwood stated that 'Crests are very bad things for us [potters] to meddle with and I never take any orders for services so ornamented. Plain ware, if it should not happen to be firsts, you will take off my hands as seconds, which if crested would be as useless' (Finer and Savage 1965, 197). By 1776 Wedgwood had changed his mind, writing that 'I have many reasons to believe there will be a great demand for services with Arms if they can be done at a moderate expense ... The painting of Arms is now become a serious business, and I must either lose or gain a great deal of business by it' (Finer and Savage 1965, 197).

The earliest documentary evidence for ceramic collegiate tableware dates to 1783; when Gonville and Caius ordered 31 dozen (372) 'plates of Staffordshire earthenware', at a cost of just under two pence per item (Venn 1897, 185). This equates to around six plates for each member of the college, or fourteen if their use was confined to fellows as Venn believed. Although plain plates continued to be used by some colleges and cooks until c. 1810, these were joined by shell-edged



Figure 3. The earliest known collegiate marked ceramic, a plate of Bartholomew Fuller of Trinity College of c. 1765–70 (by permission of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge).

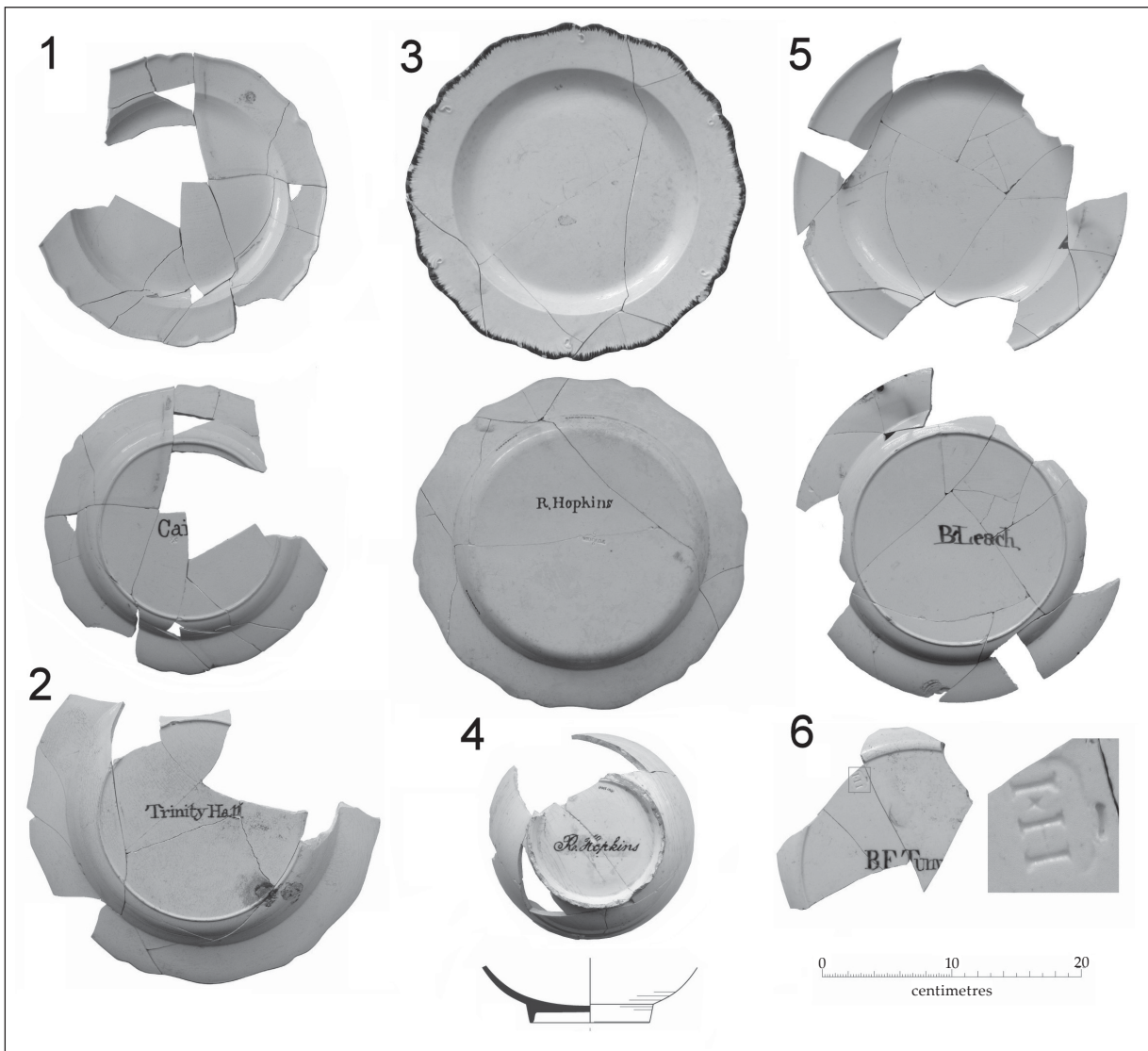


Figure 4. Late 18th- and early 19th-century creamware vessels.

1. Plate with the name of Gorville and Caius; 2. Plate with the name of Trinity Hall; 3–4. Plate and bowl of Richard Hopkins, the cook at Trinity Hall and Gonville and Caius; 5. Plate of Barrett Leach the cook at Trinity; 6. Plate of Bates Frances Tunwell, the cook at Emmanuel, with enlarged detail of manufacturer's mark.

wares with blue around the rim and names painted in gilt on the upper rim, which appear to have dominated collegiate usage *c.* 1790–1820. By *c.* 1805 at least one cook was using more heavily decorated plates, with a blue transfer printed Willow Pattern variant design. Such transfer printed designs remained rare until the 1820s, when they began to be used by more colleges. These tended to be either monochrome collegiate views or standard oriental patterns, although some polychrome patterns were used.

By the 1840s all colleges had adopted ceramic tableware and many colleges had two or three different services. Collegiate scenes remained popular, but a range of other designs were in use including plainer wares with just the college badge/coat of arms. The majority of the known marked collegiate vessels are plates, however by the mid-19th century bowls, dish-

es, soup dishes, sauceboats, serving and meat dishes plus their associated lids, drainers and stands were all being marked (Fig. 5). Additionally a range of vessels linked to food storage and preparation, such as shallow dishes and large bowls, were also marked, although these are much plainer. These vessels match well with those mentioned in a poem by John Wisken (1798–1873), who was scullion at Christ's 1825–69 and whose responsibilities included washing the crockery (Raynes 1967). Wisken noted that 'There are plenty of Dishes – large and small, Plenty of plates and soup-tureens, Corner-dishes, sauce-boats and their stand, And drainers that are used for the greens, There are basins and cups a good lot, ... And many a coarse earthen dish'.

Discoveries at collegiate sites indicate that until the mid-19th century some colleges used both

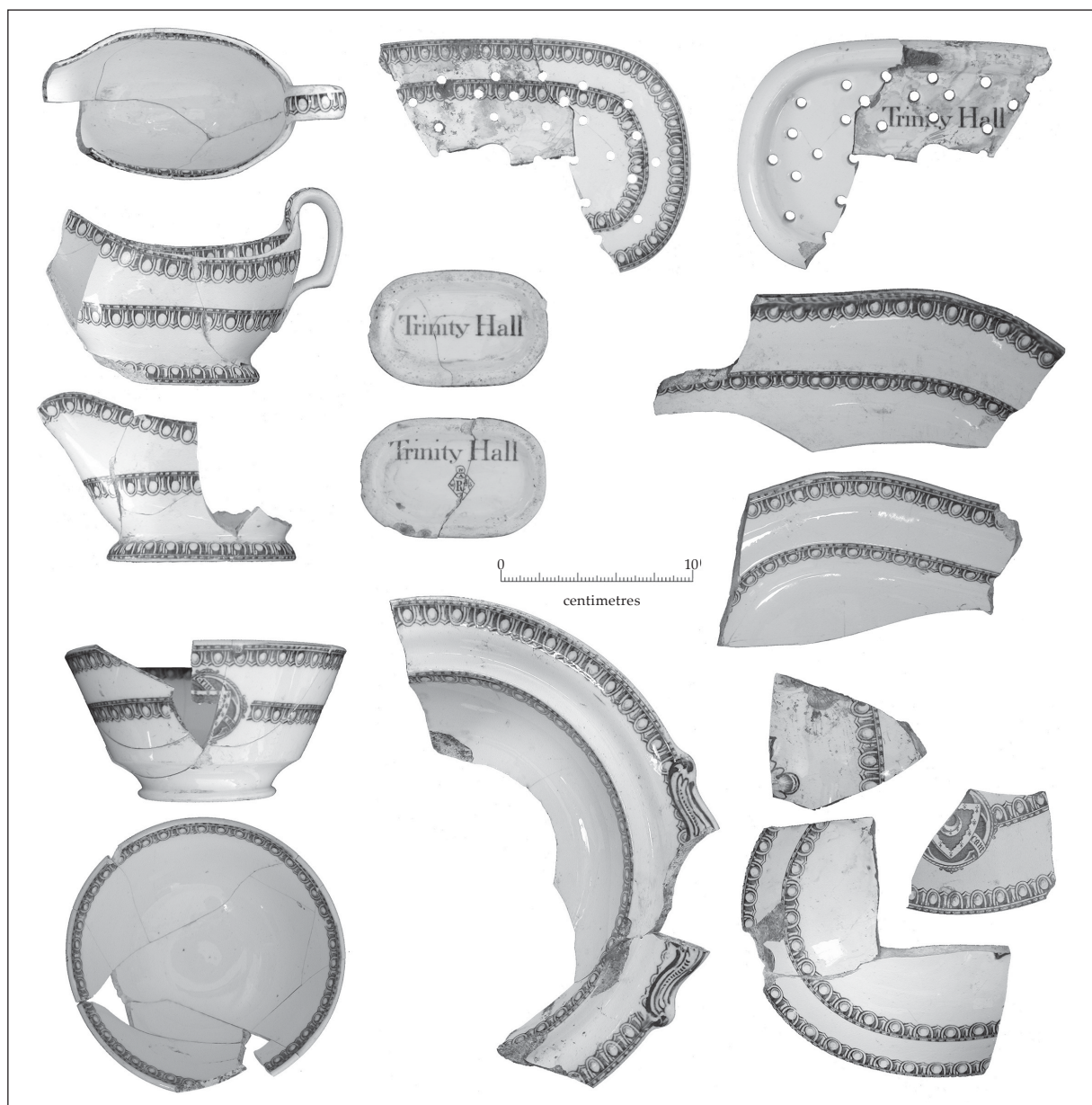


Figure 5. Range of mid-19th century whiteware vessel types used by Trinity Hall including sauce-boats, drainer, serving/meat dishes, slops bowl, tureen and tureen lid.

marked and unmarked ceramics in parallel. These unmarked tablewares are generally the common types of the period, with Willow Pattern and Asiatic Pheasant designs both found frequently. It also appears that unmarked bone china was used in some masters' lodges. There is no evidence that cups and saucers were marked, those used were the common types of the period with bone china decorated with the gilt 'tea leaf' pattern or blue sprigged floral decoration both present. In the 1870s and 1880s the names of cooks disappear, as colleges exercised greater direct control over their kitchens (Stovin 1999, 59) and college servants in general (Underwood 1990). Concurrently wares generally became plainer and cheaper, although the range of marked mate-

rial increased to include tea and coffee wares and items specifically associated with breakfast such as eggcups (Fig. 6). During the 20th century the crockery used by colleges has tended to become plainer and cheaper, although there are exceptions, such as when King's commissioned a self-consciously artistic high table dinner service from Wedgwood in 1952 designed by Richard Guyatt (1914–2007), Professor of Graphic Design at the Royal College of Art.

As well as 'official' collegiate ceramics a range of other university related ceramics were produced (Fig. 7). From the early 19th century onwards various manufacturers produced plates and other items with college scenes for the general market, the most famous and popular being Ridgway's range of Oxford



Figure 6. Early 20th-century bone china eggcups with the badge of Queens' and the retailers mark of Barrett & Son Ltd, Cambridge.

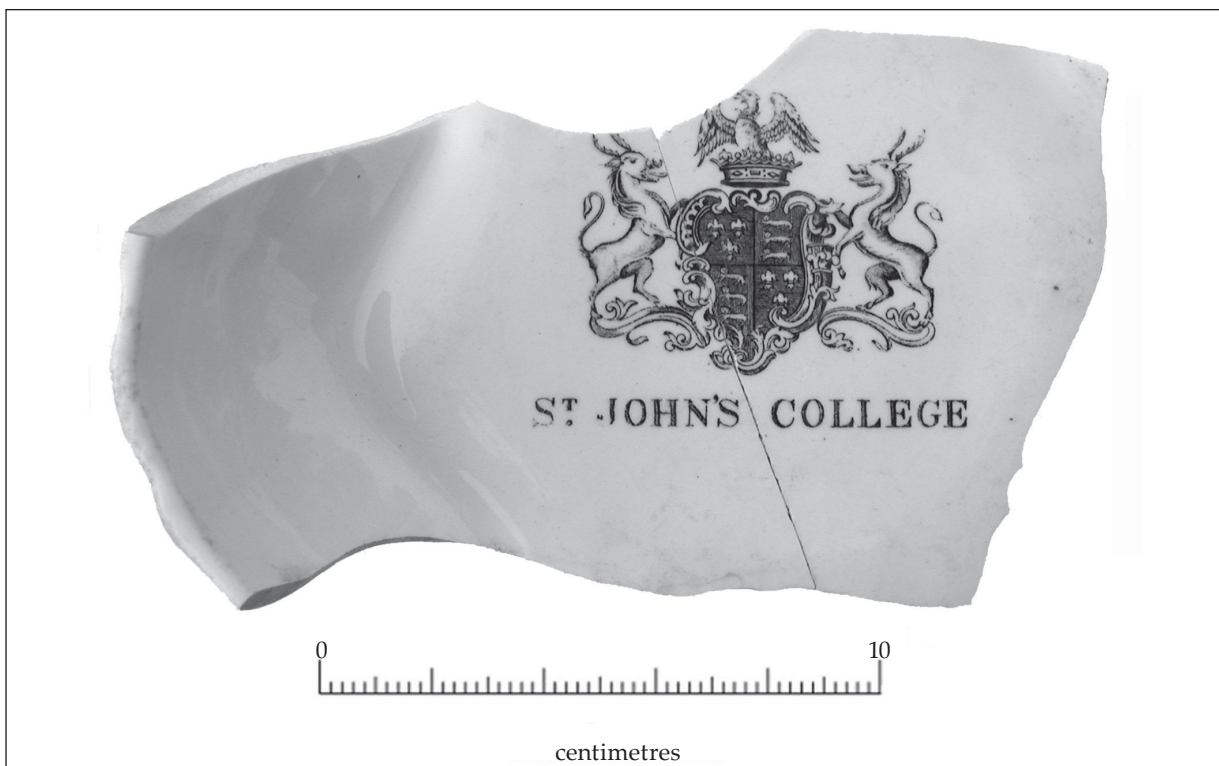


Figure 7. Early 20th-century whiteware scalloped dish or bowl with full college heraldic achievement and name of St John's, probably a tourist souvenir.

and Cambridge college scenes (Stovin 1999, 61–68). At some point in the late 19th or early 20th century the local firm of Matthew & Son started supplying various ceramics decorated with college coats of arms; these appear to be for personal use by students (Wilson 2010, 46, 129, 134, figs. 5.7, 12.5). At around the same time vessels with college related decoration began to be produced as tourist items (Stovin 1999, 69). These are relatively easy to distinguish from items used by the colleges themselves. Depictions of colleges produced for the general public have not been recovered from archaeological contexts in Cambridge suggest-

ing that they were not popular locally.

College ceramics, although manufactured by some of the leading firms including Copeland and Minton, typically represent the cheaper types of fabric and decoration of the period and are of good, but not outstanding, quality. Colleges appear never to have indulged in conspicuous expenditure on ceramic tableware, indicating that they were not used to display collegiate wealth and status. This role was instead fulfilled by silver and glassware, both of which would have possessed much more visual impact than ceramics under candlelight.

As the University of Cambridge is a collegiate entity the ceramics relate to the individual colleges rather than the university as a whole. At the end of the 18th century the University consisted of the traditional sixteen ‘old’ colleges founded between 1284 and 1596. These were joined in 1800 by Downing and between 1869 and 1896 a further seven colleges were founded bringing the total to twenty-four. The colleges vary markedly in terms of population, with Trinity and St. John’s considerably larger than any of the others. Unsurprisingly the bulk of the ceramics discovered relate to the ‘old’ colleges and within this group those with the larger populations are most frequently represented.

There are many issues that could be addressed concerning these ceramics including:

- Why were ceramics marked
- How did ceramics vary within an individual college at a point in time
- Variation between colleges at a point in time
- Variation over time within a single college
- How Cambridge differed from Oxford

Why Mark Ceramics?

The reasons for marking ceramics – which would have increased their cost – appear to have varied considerably, with a wide range of potential functions. The most fundamental distinction is between marks that would have normally been visible during dining and those that would not, such as those on the undersides of plates. Such ‘invisible’ marks exist for both colleges and college cooks; they probably represent either an attempt to discourage theft, or to allow breakages to be quantified. The latter would have facilitated either re-ordering by the college, or reimbursement of the cook. There are also several instances where more than one individual was responsible for supplying ceramics; at St John’s there were both fellows’ and scholars’ cooks as well as the college itself supplying some ceramics, whilst at Queens’ both the cook and the porter supplied ceramics. In such instances marking would allow the various sets of ceramics to be differentiated. If a cook left a particular college they would be entitled to remove their ceramics, marking would facilitate this although the ceramics’ further usefulness would have been much less where the pattern linked them closely to a specific college. Some ceramics marked with cooks’ names continued to be used at colleges by their successors after the cook died, probably involving some form of payment to the deceased cook’s beneficiaries. Marked vessels linked to food storage and preparation can also be viewed as invisible, in the sense that students and fellows would not see them. In the best understood example at Trinity Hall vessels were marked with three different names; the first linked to the dining ceramics used by fellows, the second linked to the dining ceramics used by students and a third with the surname of the cook himself (Cessford 2014b). This would allow vessels to be kept separate within a

busy kitchen, permit breakages to be differentiated – which might be significant if their replacements had to be paid from separate budgets – and would allow the cook’s personal vessels to be distinguished and removed, or paid for, when they ceased to be the college cook. As well as the main meals in hall the cooks also ran the butteries, which supplied students and fellows with bread, cheese, beer etc. to eat in their rooms. In some cases the ceramics for these are documented as being separate from those used in the hall, but in other cases they appear to have been part of the cook’s stock. It is possible that in some instances ceramics that were no longer wanted for use in the hall, perhaps because the service had been changed or they were somewhat worn, might be transferred to the buttery. In 1860 college fellows were allowed to marry and live outside college, this was taken up gradually but had become significant by the 1880s. Until the Second World War cooks sometimes supplied evening meals including crockery to fellows living outside college, picking up the crockery the next morning. There is also evidence that groups of college cooks were occasionally involved in preparing food for major civic and university events outside their colleges, which may also have involved supplying ceramics.

Names that were visible during dining would have served the same purposes as those that were invisible, and indeed it can be argued that they may have acted as a more powerful deterrent to theft as their use outside a college context would have been more readily apparent. This is effectively the opposite of the current situation, where collegiate marked ceramics encourage ‘souvenir’ theft. Additionally the names and badges/coats of arms of colleges plus views of college scenes can be viewed as a form of corporate branding, promoting community building and institutional maintenance and visually denoting status differences within the college. It is worth noting that if ‘corporate branding’ is advanced as an explanation, then many colleges did not engage in the practice and used ceramics with patterns that were in general use. To a modern sensibility the visible presence of the cook’s name on the front of a plate or in another context that would be visible during use is a jarring phenomenon and suggests that collegiate ‘corporate branding’ was in some respects unimportant.

Why Have Multiple Services?

By the mid-19th century many colleges utilised more than one dining service at the same time; the existence of two services is common and three or even four is not unusual. The most common distinction was probably based on status; with different services used by the fellows and master plus their guests at ‘high table’, normally located on a raised platform at the end of the dining hall, and the students. This is most obvious at St John’s, where different services can be associated with the fellows’ and scholars’ cooks, but also applied at Trinity Hall, where the propor-

tions of plates and other vessels from different services closely corresponds to the relative proportions of fellows and students (Cessford 2014b) (Fig. 8). In some cases fellows' services were more expensive and the marking more discreet than those for students, but counter-intuitively in other instances the opposite is true. Some services may also have been used on special occasions such as feasts, when expensive accoutrements such as silver plate were employed, higher quality food was provided and special dress was worn. It is also possible that different services were employed in the rather more private context of the master's lodge.

Inter-College Differences

From the early 19th century onwards different colleges were using markedly different services at the same time. By the mid-19th century some college services were relatively plain, marked with just a name or badge/coat of arms, others bore a depiction

of some part of the college whilst some used common patterns widely employed by the general populace such as oriental scenes. These radically different choices may in some respects be deliberately quixotic and wilfully idiosyncratic and it is possible that some choices were made specifically so that a college could stress its individuality and difference. Population size and wealth also appear to have played a role, as the richer and larger colleges were more likely to utilise specially commissioned collegiate scenes. Whilst such ceramics were an extremely minor element in terms of overall college expenditure, they did cost more and therefore represented a level of financial investment. In contrast the oriental patterns that some colleges used were the cheapest transfer-printed designs available. Although marking them would have rendered them more expensive, they would have been cheaper than collegiate scenes and could therefore have visually denoted thrift and also potentially discouraged 'souvenir' theft. There is also a considerable range of variation within the collegiate scenes employed; some of these seem to have been selected

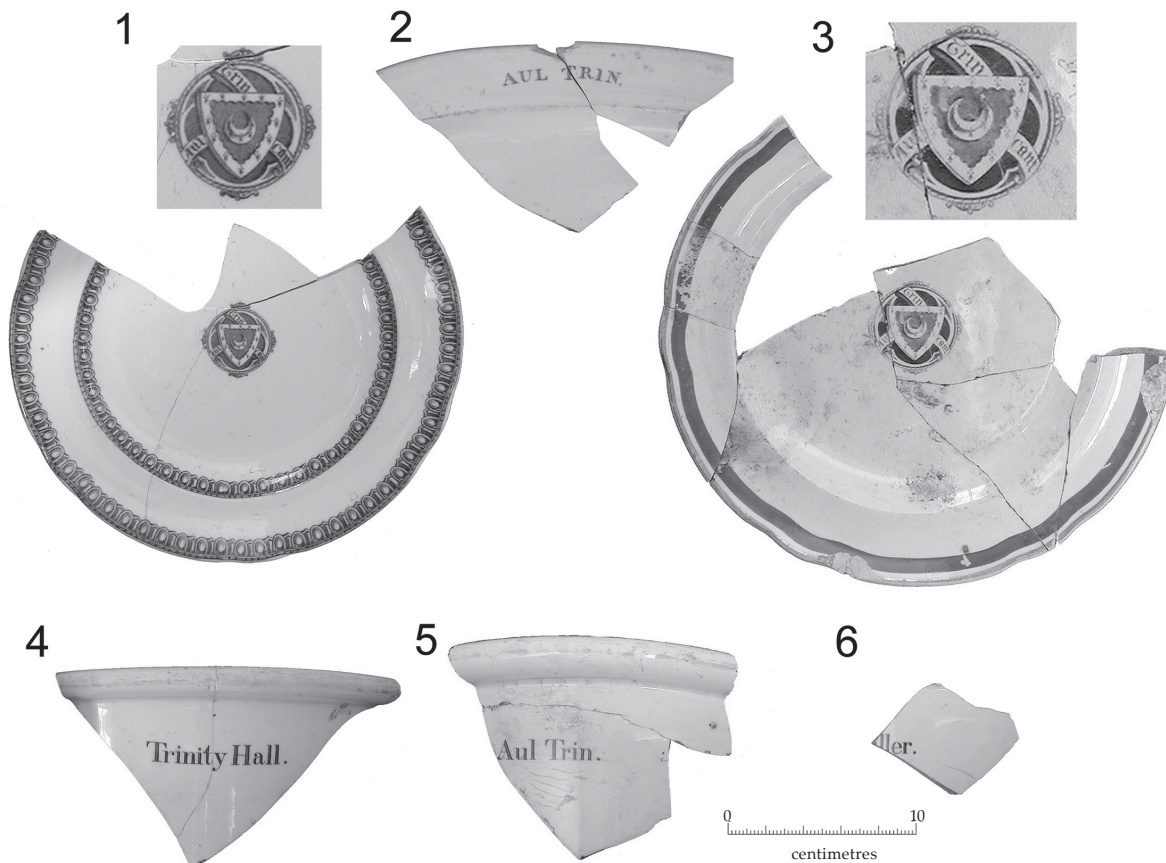


Figure 8. Whiteware plates and large plain mixing/storage bowls in use at the same time during the mid-19th century at Trinity Hall.

1. Plate from service probably used by the students; 2. Plate from service probably used by the fellows; 3. Plate from service probably used by the master; 4. Mixing/storage bowl probably associated with cooking for the students; 5. Mixing/storage bowl probably associated with cooking for the fellows; 6. Mixing/storage bowl with the name of the cook Fuller.

with a view to which scene most differentiated a particular college from its counterparts (Fig. 9). Whilst most depict groups of buildings around a court, such as Gonville and Caius, that of King's depicts the iconic view of its chapel from the Backs. Vessels linked to Trinity depict the fountain in the centre of Great Court, which was particularly distinctive as Trinity is unique in having a prominent historic fountain.

Perhaps the most useful assemblage for considering the ceramics in use at different colleges at the same point in time is a group of town refuse disposed of in a late 19th century quarry pit outside the town (Cessford and Evans 2014). There were 21 collegiate vessels representing up to seven colleges; these include non-collegiate patterns (Trinity, Trinity Hall), collegiate scenes (Gonville and Caius), a prominent badge/coat of arms or portion thereof (Magdalene, St John's), plain vessels with just a small badge/coat of arms and name (Downing, Selwyn) and plain vessels with just a cook's name (Trinity).

Change Over Time

Over time the ceramics used at a college would change. The periodicity with which this occurred varied, but if relatively minor distinctions are ignored then significant transitions typically occurred between every twenty and forty years. Changing complete services would have represented a reasonable financial investment given the number and range of vessels involved and was presumably not a decision made lightly. Many such changes were essentially technologically driven, as fabrics and types of decoration in general use changed. There is evidence that some colleges had long-term relationships with particular manufacturers: at Trinity Hall replacement vessels for a service initially produced by Copeland in the 1840s were still being obtained from the same manufacturer in the 1870s. In some instances there is evidence for much greater longevity; the view of

Clare that was first used c. 1820–25 remained in use until at least the 1880s, whilst a scene of Gonville and Caius that was initially commissioned c. 1825 was still being purchased in the 1960s and remained in limited use until the 1990s. Even when colleges decided to change services they often tried to retain some continuity of design, selecting broadly similar patterns.

One of the easiest ways to consider change over time is to look at a specific college, and one of the best understood is St John's (Figure 10). The earliest cooks known to have used marked ceramics were Christopher Smithson and William Scott. Smithson, who was cook in 1782, but may have been working as early as c. 1769, appears to have initially ordered plain creamware plates with his name hand-painted on the underside in blue, but switched to using pearlware at some point after c. 1775. William Scott (1768–1805), used similar plain creamware plates, with a Queen's pattern rim. One notable difference is that Scott's name was on the upper surface of the plate rim in blue, so that it would have been visible during dining. Additionally the college itself ordered similar creamware plates on its own behalf, marked S I C for St. John's College. Despite the fact that only a few late 18th century plates have been found four different impressed makers' marks are present: the letters A (probably one of two Staffordshire potters named William Adams who began manufacturing creamware in 1775 and 1779 respectively), IH (John Harrison of Stoke who is listed in directories of 1781–83; Pomfret 2008), P (unknown) and (T possibly Jacob Tittensor, c. 1780–95 (Godden 1964, 618). This contrasts markedly with the 19th century situation when ceramics tended to be obtained from just a single company over much longer periods.

Either William Scott or more probably his son, Thomas Scott, the fellows' cook (c. 1808–23) used creamware plates that were relatively plain apart from an even scalloped rim with blue shell-edged decoration and the name Scott in gilt. Henry Shippey who

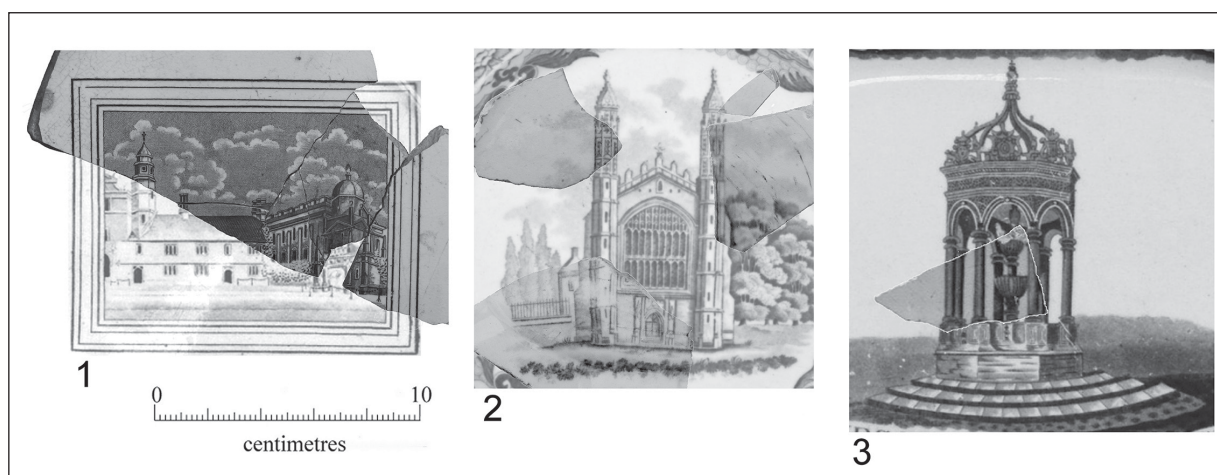


Figure 9. Mid-19th century whiteware plates with college views.

1. Caius Court, Gonville and Caius; 2. King's College chapel; 3. The Great Court fountain, Trinity.

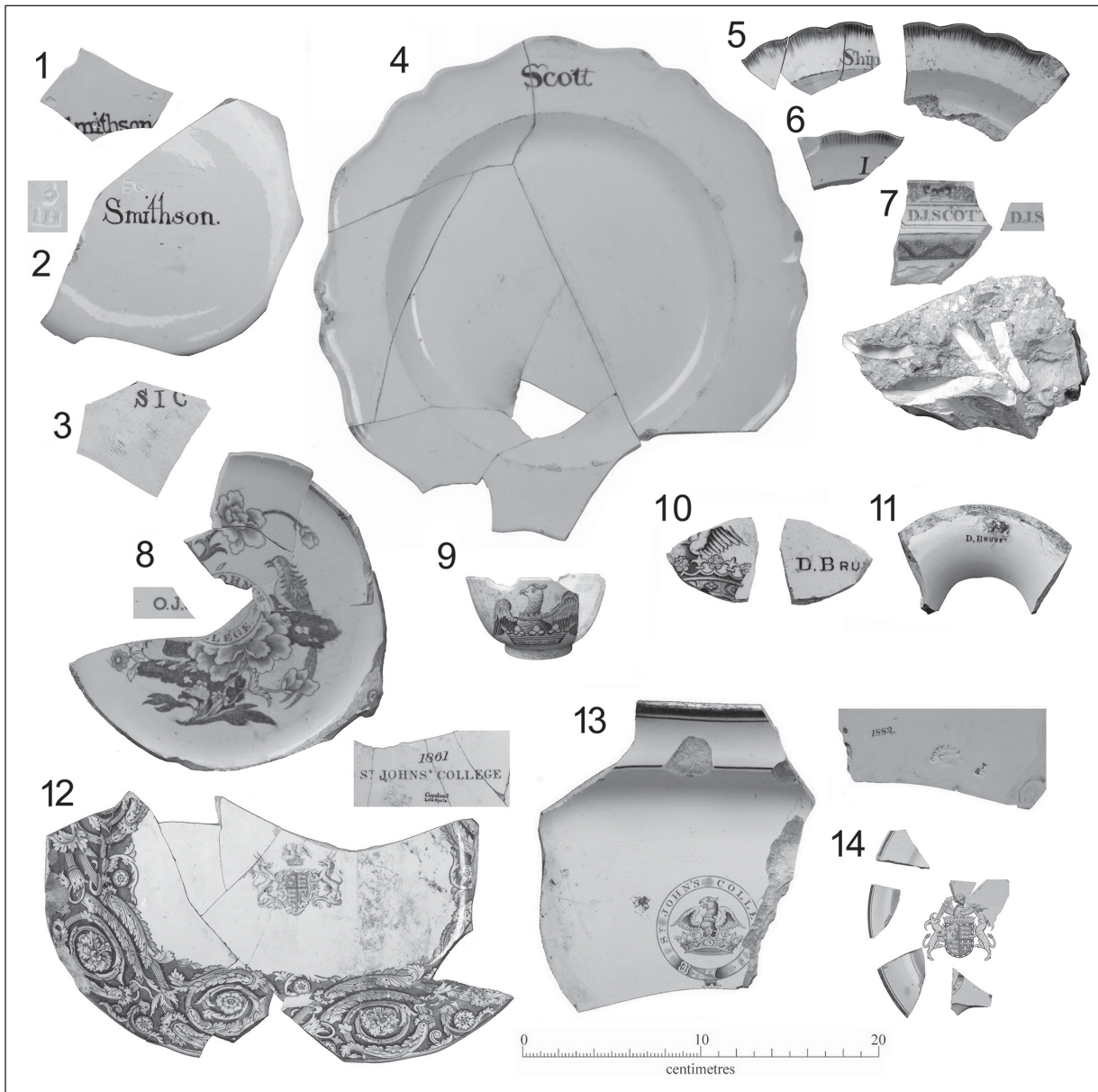


Figure 10. Ceramics associated with St John's College from various excavations.

1. Creamware sherd with surname Smithson; 2. Pearlware sherd with surname Smithson and impressed mark IH; 3. Creamware sherd with initials S I C for St. John's College; 4. Nearly complete creamware plate with the surname Scott; 5. Sherds from a whiteware shell edged plate with the surname Ship[pey]; 6. Sherd from a whiteware blue shell edged plate with the name I P[rrior]; 7. Sherd from a whiteware meat/serving dish with the name D J Scott plus view of sherd embedded in concrete; 8. Blue transfer printed whiteware plate with the name O.J.[Jones] (created by merging images of three vessels); 9. Small whiteware bowl, probably teabowl, with black transfer printed eagle ducally gorged arising out of a coronet; 10. Whiteware vessels with purple transfer printed eagle ducally gorged arising out of a coronet and the name D Bru[vet]; 11. Plain whiteware vessel with name D Bruvet; 12–13. Brown transfer printed pates produced by Copeland in 1861 and 1882 with full college heraldic achievement and eagle ducally gorged arising out of a coronet respectively; 14. Early 20th-century college saucers with full college heraldic achievement. (10.8–9 by permission of Oxford Archaeology East)

was the contemporary scholars' cook (c. 1813–37) used very similar plates, as did Thomas Scott's successor as fellows' cook Thomas Prior (1824–45), although in his case the shell-edged decoration was the less common green. Prior also used at least two polychrome gilded patterns of 'Coloured Wall' and 'Peonies and Daisies' (Stovin, 1999, 54, fig. 3). The polychrome vessels were produced in 1829 or later, suggesting that the simpler shell-edged plates are earlier. Another change was that on these plates Prior's name was on the underside of the plate and was given in full, with the Latin spelling *Iacobus* (Stovin, 1999, 54).

The scholars' cook David James Scott (1837–59) used markedly different ceramics from his contemporary Prior, employing blue-transfer printed vessels with an oriental Bridgeless Chinoiserie pattern. Vessels with this form of decoration were amongst the cheapest of the period and would have been considerably less expensive than the polychrome vessels used at the same time by Prior. These vessels had Scott's full name on the rear of the vessel and his surname and initials on the front. Prior's successor as fellows' cook, Owen John Jones (1846–73), appears to have used serving dishes with a blue transfer printed pattern and plates with a blue transfer printed floral scene with a bird and the college name in the centre. After over half a century of there being two college cooks, the posts of fellows' and scholars' cooks were combined in 1873. The individual appointed was Charles Adolphus Desiré Bruvet, who had been born in Paris in c. 1825, became a journeyman cook at Trinity in 1867 and moved to St John's in 1871 as a junior cook. Bruvet 'made the Kitchens pay, took to money-lending, and had to leave' in 1877 (Hilton 2011, 271), subsequently running kitchens at various Cambridge hotels (1878–87), where he operated what was described as a 'pirate' college kitchen serving *table d'hôte* (multi-course meals with only a few choices charged at a fixed total price) (Kempson 1912, 251). Bruvet used plain vessels with his name, probably for food preparation, plus plates with his name on the rear and collegiate badge of an eagle ducally gorged arising out of a coronet on the front in purple. In 1877 the college took over direct control of the kitchens and subsequent cooks were servants, not independent traders, with management responsibilities taken over by the college steward, as a result cooks ceased to commission ceramics marked with their names.

In October 1840 St. John's ordered fifty dozen (600) plates with badge and twenty dozen (240) plates with a brown border and arms from Copeland and Garrett (Stovin 1999, 57). It is possible that these were for the students and fellows respectively; if this is the case the order would equate to 1.7 plates per student and 4.1 per fellow. Plates with badge cost 7½d apiece and those with brown border and arms 7d apiece. The fact that plates for students were more expensive and therefore more decorated is interesting and parallels other colleges such as Trinity Hall. There were then further orders in September of 1842, 1843, 1844 and 1845. The Junior Bursar's accounts for September 1861 record that one shilling was charged for 'carriage of

pattern plates to Mr Copeland', and shortly after '£23-5-0 to Mr Copeland for crockery'. The sum involved would probably have been enough for a full table setting of 142 pieces, enough for twelve table places (Charles and Stovin, 2014, 66). This order probably relates to an archaeologically known brown transfer printed plate produced in 1861 by Copeland, this has the ornate floral Warwick border and the full college heraldic achievement in the centre of the plate. Archaeological evidence also indicates that in August 1882 Copeland produced more vessels for the college; these were also brown transfer prints, but the border is much simpler consisting of just one thick and two narrow lines. In the centre of the plate is the collegiate badge of an eagle ducally gorged arising out of a coronet surrounded by a garter containing the name of the college. It also appears that in the mid-19th century the college was using a black transfer-printed pattern of an eagle and a crown, although there is no evidence for the precise dating of this. After 1877 the college also continued to order the polychrome and gilded Coloured Wall pattern associated with Thomas Prior, as some of these survive with marks demonstrating they were manufactured 1885–1905 (Charles and Stovin 2014, 67), and the blue transfer printed floral scene with a bird associated with Owen John Jones. The latest ceramics associated with St John's that have been discovered archaeologically were some early 20th century fragments of plates and a cup with the full college heraldic achievement in either brown or blue.

The archaeological and other evidence shows that between the late 18th and early 20th centuries the nature of the ceramics employed at St John's changed markedly, although from the mid-19th century onwards there was also a considerable amount of continuity. One way to think about change is in terms of the time an individual might spend at the college. Whilst a student who was present for only three years would be unlikely to witness any changes in ceramics, other individuals were part of the college for much longer. One such person was the mathematician James Wood (1760–1839), who was a student (1778–82) and then became a fellow, president (1802–15) and master (1815–39), having been at the college for over sixty years when he died. Wood may well have been present at the college when Christopher Smithson first began to use marked ceramics, he would then have used ceramics supplied by his successor William Scott and then the fellows' cooks Thomas Scott and Thomas Prior. Wood died just before the earliest documented purchase of marked ceramics by the college itself, raising the possibility that this was an innovation by his successor as master, Ralph Tatham.

One issue that this paper has not addressed is the archaeological contexts that the collegiate ceramics have been recovered from, as this will be addressed in detail elsewhere (Cessford in preparation D). The contexts are listed in Table 1. Some ceramics never made it as far as the college and were found in deposits associated with the ceramic retailer Barrett & Son. One vessel, for example, relates to Desiré Bruvet: as it

Table 1. Cambridge collegiate ceramics recovered under archaeological or quasi-archaeological conditions. MNV = Minimum Number of Vessels, * = marked ceramics not mentioned in text, ** = material not personally examined by author.

Site/Premises	Context of recovery	Dating of depositional context	Total ceramics from deposit (MNV)	Collegiate ceramics (MNV)	% Collegiate ceramics	colleges/college cook (n/s)	Colleges/college cooks represented	Reference
Brook Farm, Haslingfield	Ploughsoil	N/A	Unk.	6	Unk.	2 (1)	Taylor (Queens'), Germany or Page (Queens')	Cessford in Cambridge Archaeological Field Group 2014
Cambridge Castle	Civil War ditch	1802–07	Unk.	3	Unk.	3	Trinity or Trinity Hall, Smithson (St John's), Wilson (King's)	Cessford 2008
Castle Street (No. 5)	Building foundation	19th	Unk.	1	Unk.	1	Gurkin (Jesus)	Cessford 2011
Christ's Lane (No. 1)	Backfilled cellar	1882–1900	20	1	5	1	Barnes (Unk.)	Cessford in Newman 2007
Corn Exchange Court	Backfilled cellar and other features	1843–45	302	20	6.6	5	Hopkins (Gonville and Caius and Trinity Hall), Trinity Hall, Gonville and Caius, Tunwell (Emmanuel), Leach (Trinity), Scott (St John's)	Cessford 2014b
Corn Exchange Street (No. 12)	Cellar backfill	1912–21	31	1	3.2	1	St. John's	Cessford 2007
Corpus Christi College, Hostel Yard	Building footings	1900–20	1	1	100	1	Corpus Christi	Cessford in Cessford and Fallon 2006
Drummer Street, stables	General deposit	Late 19th	Unk.	2	Unk.	2	Spencer (Unk.), Barnes (Unk.)	Cessford in Newman 2007
Green Road, No. 2**	General deposit	1890–1904	Unk.	6	Unk.	1	Trinity Hall	Meckseper 2015
Harvest Way (No's 9–15)	Pit	1820–40	Unk.	2	Unk.	2 (1)	Hudson (Trinity), Trinity	Cessford in Atkins in preparation A
Harvest Way (No's 9–15)	Pit	19th	Unk.	11	Unk.	5 (2)	Hudson (Trinity), Jones (St. John's) Leach (Trinity), St. John's, Trinity	Cessford in Atkins in preparation A
Harvest Way (No's 9–15)	Pit	1820s	Unk.	2	Unk.	3 (1)	Claydon and JC (Unk.)	Cessford in Atkins in preparation A
Harvest Way (No's 9–15)	Cesspit	1839–50	Unk.	1	Unk.	1	St. John's	Fletcher in Atkins in preparation A
King's College, front lawn	Building demolition	1829	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.	1	King's	Cessford in preparation A
Newmarket Road (No. 78)	Pit backfill	Mid–late 19th	Unk.	1	Unk.	1	King's	Cessford 2014b
Newmarket Road (No. 78)	Soakaway backfill	Late 19th–early 20th	Unk.	1	Unk.	1	Trinity	Cessford 2014b
Newmarket Road (No. 78)	Pit backfill	Early–mid 19th	Unk.	1	Unk.	1	Shippey (St. John's)	Cessford 2014b
Newmarket Road (No. 79)	Pit backfill	Mid–late 19th	Unk.	1	Unk.	1	Hudson (Trinity)	Cessford 2014b
Newmarket Road (No. 79)	Shaft backfill	1886–90	131	6	4.6	4	Hudson (Trinity), Gonville and Caius, Fuller (uncertain), Trinity Hall	Cessford 2014b
Newmarket Road (No. 80)	Pit backfill and hard-core	1877–80	469	170	36.2	4	Trinity Hall, Moore (Clare Hall), Brown (Clare Hall), Fuller (Gonville and Caius), Jones (St. John's)	Cessford 2014b

Table 1, continued.

Newmarket Road (No's 132–36)	Pit	19th	Unk.	1	Unk.	1	Christ's	Cessford in Atkins in preparation B
Newmarket Road (No's 132–36)	Pit	19th	Unk.	2	Unk.	2 (1)	Hudson (Trinity)	Cessford in Atkins in preparation B
North West Cambridge	Gravel quarry pit	1888–1900	383+	21	5.5	7	Downing, Fuller (Gonville and Caius), Swannell (Magdalene), Selwyn, St. John's, Hudson (Trinity), Trinity, Trinity Hall	Cessford in Cessford and Evans 2014
Ridley Hall	Unstratified, probably garden soil	1870s?	Unk.	6	Unk.	1	King's	Brittain 2009*; Lewis <i>et al.</i> 2012*
Robert Sayle Department Store	Cellar backfill	1913–25	500	2	0.4	1	Queens'	Cessford 2012a
Selwyn Divinity School	Construction deposits	1877–79	Unk.	2	Unk.	2	St John's, Hills (Magdalene)	Cessford 2012b
Selwyn Divinity School	Building foundations	1877–79	Unk.	4	Unk.	1	Scott (St. John's)	Cessford 2012b
St. Andrew's Street (No. 20)	Well backfill	1840–60	87	1	1.1	1	Leach (Trinity)	Cessford 2007
St. Andrew's Street (No. 21)	Soakaway backfill	1813–23	68	1	1.5	1	Trinity	Cessford 2007
St. Andrew's Street (No. 21)	Well construction	1845	Unk.	1	Unk.	1	Wicks (Emmanuel)	Cessford 2007
St. Andrew's Street (No. 21)	Hard-core	1924–40	157	1	0.6	1	Corpus Christi	Cessford 2007
St. Andrew's Street (No. 23)	Soakaway backfill	1808–25	177	1	0.6	1	Wicks (Emmanuel)	Cessford 2007
St. Andrew's Street (No. 25)	Cellar backfill	1882–85	178	3	1.7	3	Barber (Sidney Sussex), Bruvet (St. John's), Gonville and Caius	Cessford 2007
St. Andrew's Street (No. 69)	Unknown	Unk.	Unk.	1	Unk.	1	St. John's	Addyman and Biddle 1965*
St. Clement's Gardens	Garden soil	1790s	Unk.	5	Unk.	1	Scott (St. John's), Smithson (St. John's), S I C (St. John's)	Cessford 2016
St. John's College, Chapel Court	Garden soil	N/A	Unk.	2	Unk.	2	Scott (St. John's)	St John's College website
St. John's College, Chapel Court	Garden soil	N/A	Unk.	2	Unk.	2	Scott (St. John's), Prior (St. John's)	Hall in Dickens 1996
St. John's College, First Court	Garden soil	N/A	Unk.	7	Unk.	1	St. John's	Cessford in Newman 2011b
Tibb's Row (No. 4)	Building foundations	Late 19th	8	1	12.5	1	Pembroke	Cessford 2007
Tibb's Row (No. 4)	Saw-pit backfill	1874–81	33	1	3	1	Trinity	Cessford 2007
Trinity College, Kitchens	Wall footings	1823–25	Unk.	1	Unk.	1	Henry Hudson (Trinity)	Newman 2011a
Trinity College, New Library Bookstore	Garden soil	N/A	Unk.	3	Unk.	2	Leach (Trinity), Hudson (Trinity)	Cessford in preparation C
Trinity College, Old Court	Probably building foundations	Unk.	Unk.	1	Unk.	1	Fuller (Trinity)	Rackham 1935, 83, no.552
Trinity College, service trench	Service trench	1960s	Unk.	29	Unk.	1	Trinity	Cessford in Rees 2012
Vicar's Farm**	Middens	1880–1900	Unk.	3	Unk.	2	King's, Scott (St. John's)	Lucas in Lucas and Whittaker 2001
Westminster College	Unstratified, probably garden soil	1897–99?	Unk.	3	Unk.	3 (2)	Shippey (St. John's), St. John's, Trinity	Cessford in Graham in preparation

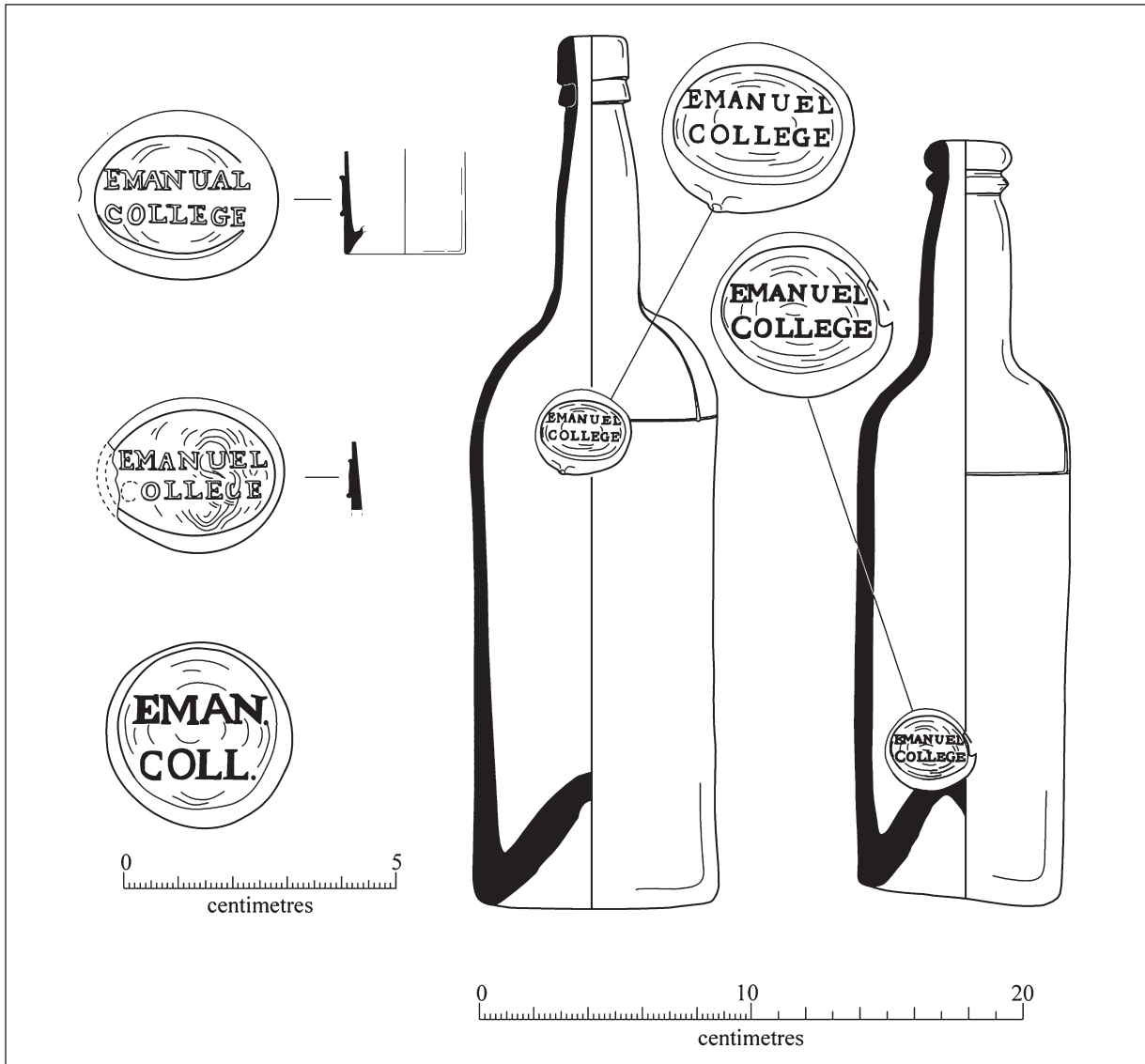


Figure 11. Late 18th–mid 19th century Emmanuel glass bottle seals and complete bottles still owned by college.

was deposited after 1882 it appears that this plate was ordered by Bruvet but that before it arrived he had left under a cloud in 1877. The plate was then presumably no longer wanted, remaining in limbo for a few years at Barrett's premises before being disposed of in a general clearance of unwanted material prompted by a re-development of the property.

Whilst some sherds have been found during investigations at the college the number is relatively low, partly because few of the 18th–20th century features that typically produce large assemblages such as backfilled cellars, cesspits and soakaways are encountered at college sites. Some have also been found at nearby sites where the college cooks worked. The college appears to have occasionally given away unwanted ceramics, for example some were found in deposits associated with a school for St John's and Trinity choristers. Individuals known as 'scavengers' were employed to remove waste from the colleges.

This material joined the official civic refuse system, with examples found near the 'common dunghills' of the town where waste was disposed of and in quarry pits in the town fields. Quite a few examples have, however, been found at sites with no obvious direct connection to the college or its cooks. In one instance it is possible to suggest that a plate of William Scott passed into the hands of Richard Hopkins, the cook at both Trinity Hall and Gonville and Caius who is known to have been on good terms with Scott. It then passed on to Richard's widow Sarah Hopkins and after she died it was apparently disposed of in a cellar associated with an inn that her son probably had business connections with (Cessford 2014a). The William Scott plate was deposited nearly 40 years after Scott died, on a site that neither he nor St John's had any direct connection with. Only the exceptional nature of the assemblage in which the plate was deposited permitted this set of connections to be deduced. It is

likely that similar circumstances lie behind other discoveries where collegiate ceramics have been found in locations with no obvious explanation.

Contrasting Oxford

There are a few much earlier marked ceramics from Oxford, although these do not appear to represent a sustained tradition of collegiate marking. A 15th–early 16th century Brill/Boarstall jug sherd from Merton College incised ...rton or ...nton suggests that batches of pottery were produced to order for the college (Blinkhorn in Poore *et al.* 2006, 275–78, fig. 18). There are also a few late 17th–early 18th century stoneware flagons marked with symbols and initials, some of which were produced by a London manufacturer John Dwight who had studied at Oxford (Green 1999). None of these can be definitively connected to the university, but one marked with the initials RMF may be linked to Roger and Mary Fowler. Roger was a cook at St. Alban's Hall (an independent academic hall purchased by Merton in 1548 and annexed by them in 1881) but also ran a cook-shop so the marked vessel need not be collegiate (Leeds 1933, 473, pl. LXXXIII). Reliable evidence for the use of marked ceramics at Oxford colleges begins at around the same time as at Cambridge, the earliest datable Oxford piece is a relatively plain creamware bowl of Trinity marked with the date 1762 (Hassall *et al.* 1984, 216, fig. 29.5). Most of the marked Oxford pieces are similar to those from Cambridge, the bulk of the evidence relates to late 18th–mid 19th century plates and as at Cambridge the names include both colleges and college cooks. One complicating factor is that unlike Cambridge many Oxford cooks also ran other establishments, such as inns or coffeehouses, so identifying vessels as specifically collegiate is problematic. One difference is the late 18th century evidence for the marking of stoneware tankards of Wadham (Bruce-Mitford 1939, 139, pl. xv.12–3), for which comparable evidence is currently lacking in Cambridge. At least nine of the twenty-two Oxford colleges founded by the end of the 18th century used marked ceramics: Brasenose, Christ Church, Exeter, Merton, Pembroke, St John's, Trinity, Wadham, and Worcester

(Hassall *et al.* 1984; Jeffries and Braybrooke 2015; various pers. comm.). The best evidence for collegiate ceramics marked with the cook's name relates to Christ Church; with vessels marked with the names of J Martin, William Musgrove and John Webb Cluff, who were successively cooks c. 1773–1813. One difference is that marked bowls appear to be more common at Oxford, although as much of this evidence derives from the Radcliffe Infirmary site this may relate to a specific hospital diet where gruel, milk-pottage and broth were common (Jeffries and Braybrooke 2015, 254). The practice of marking ceramics appears to have declined at Oxford during the early–mid 19th century, archaeological evidence becomes rare and perhaps more tellingly there are few surviving examples in collections compared to Cambridge (Stovin 1999). One other contrast is that there is copious evidence that most Oxford colleges used glass wine bottles bearing their initials or seal c. 1750–1850 (Banks 1997), whereas at Cambridge only Emmanuel used these for a limited period in the early/mid-19th century (Table 2; Fig. 11; Cessford 2009). The reason for this contrast is unclear, although other types of bottle seals such as those relating to individuals and inns/taverns are also much less common in Cambridge than Oxford.

Discussion

The regularity with which marked ceramics of the 1760s onwards associated with Cambridge colleges and college cooks are recovered archaeologically in the city emphasises the sheer numbers that must have been manufactured, used and discarded over 250 years. The numbers involved must certainly be in the hundreds of thousands and more probably millions, dwarfing the few hundreds recovered archaeologically. The overall impression is that these plates and other vessels were not especially significant to the college authorities, cooks or students. They were very much everyday 'small things forgotten' (cf. Deetz 1977), but the choice of how, where and what to mark ceramics with to distinguish their association with a particular college or college cook, how this varied between colleges and how it changed over time is perhaps one

Table 2. Cambridge collegiate sealed bottles and pewter recovered under archaeological or quasi-archaeological conditions.

Site/ Premises	Context of recovery	Dating	Material	Item(s)	No. of collegiate items	College	Reference
Emmanuel Tennis Courts	Garden soil	Unk.	Glass	Bottle seal	1	Emmanuel	Cessford 2009
St. Andrew's Street (No. 25)	Cellar backfill	1882–85	Glass	Bottle seals	2	Emmanuel	Cessford 2009
St. John's College, riverside	Unk.	Unk.	Pewter	Plate	1	St. John's	Unpublished
Old Schools	Building foundations	Mid-18th	Pewter	Small bowl or tankard	1	King's	Newman and Evans 2011

of the most fascinating aspects of the archaeology of 18th–20th century Cambridge. Hopefully as developer-funded investigations continue the understanding of these ceramics will grow with the corpus of such material. Indeed the effectively random nature of the sites investigated through developer-funded archaeology in Cambridge has proved particularly fruitful in recovering collegiate ceramics, in a way that a research-driven agenda for considering collegiate material culture would probably not have achieved, as many of the most informative assemblages have been recovered from counter-intuitive locations.

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