

The Nailsea Glassworks,

Nailsea, North Somerset

**Archaeological Desk-top Study**

Andrew F Smith, BSc, MA, CEng, MIEE

Avon Archaeological Unit,

Bristol

January, 2004

*The cover photograph shows the view across the Scotch Horn playing field towards the glassworks as existing in 1900 approx. and is reproduced by courtesy of Mr M J Tozer, 65, Westward Drive, Pill, N. Somerset, BS20 0JW.*

©The M J Tozer Collection.

## **ABSTRACT**

The Study Area, centred at NGR ST 4776 7098, currently consists of several different zones, which when combined formed the holdings of the former Nailsea Glassworks, established in 1788 and operating until 1873. The maximum extent of the Study Area has been based on the annotated plan of 1870 [BRO (Sturges) 37959/22].

There is a large standing building on the extreme western edge of the area. Adjacent is the major excavated site of the “New House Cone” (which is severely overgrown, at the time of writing). A very large part of the original manufacturing site has recently had a new supermarket and its associated car parks and access roads imposed upon it. There was a large area to the north of the main part of the site which was also within the ownership of the glassworks, but which was separated from it by the present High Street. This was partly glass workers’ housing, but the 1870 plan identifies it as “Colliery”.

In addition there is a significant amount of the former glass-workers’ housing extant, though not in an original condition, and most of the study area had already been given over to housing development, mainly in the latter part of the twentieth century.

The whole complex was, in its heyday, considered to be one of the four major British glassworks. In addition to the utilitarian window and bottle manufactory there is a tradition of ornamental glass manufacture to which the generic title “Nailsea Glass” has been given, although this is the subject of some debate.

The study, generously sponsored by Tesco Stores, Limited, has been undertaken as part of an overall review of the history and archaeology of the whole site.

## **Disclaimer**

Although Avon Archaeological Unit and the author take all professional care to ensure the completeness and accuracy of this study, no responsibility can be accepted for the omission of any fact or opinion, however caused.

## CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	ii
CONTENTS .....	iii
Abbreviations .....	iv
Acknowledgements: .....	iv
Note.....	iv
Copyright.....	iv
Picture Credits .....	iv
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. METHODOLOGY.....	3
3. SITE VISITS .....	3
4. GEOLOGY, TOPOGRAPHY AND CURRENT USE .....	3
Table 1.1 - Land Use areas (1870) .....	4
5. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND .....	5
Literary and Pictorial Evidence .....	5
Cartographic evidence .....	9
Table 1.2 - Selected Summary Abstract of 1840 Tithe Map Apportionment .....	16
Table 1.3 - Schedule attached to 1870 plan .....	19
6. RECORDED ARCHAEOLOGY .....	22
7. AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY .....	24
8. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS.....	25
9. ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL AND ASSESSMENT .....	26
10. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES .....	26
11. PHOTOGRAPHS.....	28
Table 1.4.1 - Schedule of Photographs /Plates 1 - 5 .....	28
Table 1.4.2 - Schedule of Photographs / Plates 6 – 26 .....	29
APPENDIX 1 - North Somerset Sites and Monuments Record Trawl.....	35
APPENDIX 2 - Aerial Photograph Catalogue .....	38
APPENDIX 3 - J R Lucas' 1805 Patent Registration - Scotland .....	39
APPENDIX 4 – ‘Scotch Horn Centre’ version of the 1870 Plan .....	40

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Location Map .....	1
Figure 1.2: Site Centred Map (Not to scale, but based on a 1:1500 OS original.) .....	2
Figure 1.3: Child's, or Limekiln, Glasshouse on River Bank near Hotwells Road – 1821 .....	6
Figure 1.4: Part of Robert Morden's Map of Somersetshire, 1695 .....	9
Figure 1.5: Part of B Donn's Map, 1769 (courtesy Bristol Reference Library) .....	10
Figure 1.6: Brown's plan (courtesy BRO) .....	13
Figure 1.7: 1830s Plan [BRO Sturge Deposit 32395(25)] .....	14
Figure 1.8: Extract from 1840 Tithe Map (courtesy SRO) .....	15
Figure 1.9: Extract from 1844 Tithe Map (Nailsea Library) .....	17
Figure 1.10: 1870 Plan of the Nailsea Glassworks Holding [BRO Sturge Deposit 57959 (22)] .....	18
Figure 1.11: Comparison of specific changes between 1840/44 Tithe Maps and 1870 plan in a limited area. .....	21
Figure 1.12: From AP 3082 CPE/ / 1869: 4 DEC 46: F20” // REST'D (RAF photograph).....	24
Figure 1.13: Location plan for Photographs / Plates 1 - 5 at the centre of the New House Cone .....	29
Figure 1.14: Location plan for Nailsea Glassworks Photographs/Plates 6 - 26 .....	30

Figure 1.15: Plates 1 - 8	31
Figure 1.16: Plates 9 - 16	32
Figure 1.17: Plates 17 - 22	33
Figure 1.18: Plates 23 - 26	34
Figure 1.19: Nailsea Glassworks - SMR map (500m approx. centred on site.)	37
Figure 1.20: Another version of the 1870 plan	40

### **Abbreviations**

AAU	Avon Archaeological Unit
AIBT	Avon Industrial Buildings Trust
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum (also sometimes quoted as OD)
BCL	Bristol Central Reference Library
BCM	Bristol City Museum
BIAS	Bristol Industrial Archaeological Society
BRO	Bristol Record Office
GPS	Global Positioning System
NDLHS	Nailsea and District Local History Society
NGR	National Grid Reference
NMR	National Monuments Record Office, Swindon
NSM	North Somerset Museum
NS SMR	North Somerset Sites and Monuments Record
OS	Ordnance Survey
SRO	Somerset Record Office

### **Acknowledgements:**

In general these are all covered in the main Introduction to the Study.

### **Note**

Whereas Avon Archaeological Unit have taken all care to produce a comprehensive summary of the known and recorded archaeological evidence, no responsibility can be accepted for any omissions of fact or opinion, however caused.

### **Copyright**

Please see the Copyright statement in the main Introduction to the Study.

### **Picture Credits**

The cover photograph, ©The M J Tozer Collection, is reproduced by courtesy of Mr M J Tozer, 65, Westward Drive, Pill, N. Somerset, BS20 0JW.

All other figures and photographs are by the author or derived from material held in the archive or in the North Somerset SMR, unless credited to the contrary in the text or adjacent to the Figure(s)/photograph(s) in question.