

LONDON TIN-GLAZED POTTERY

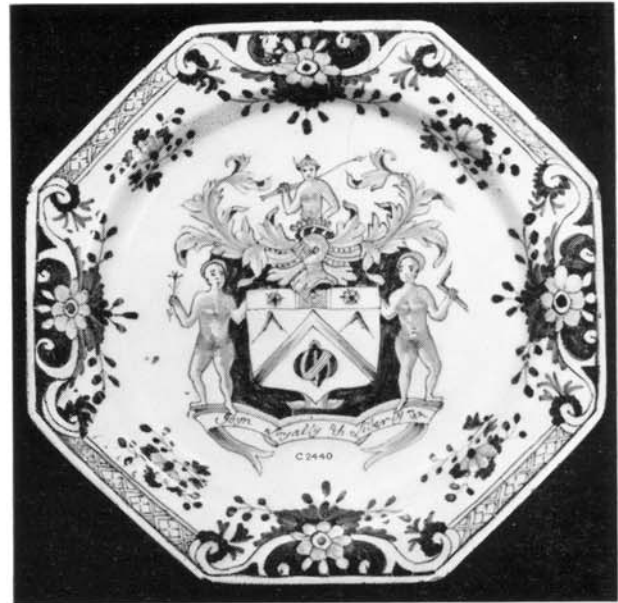
By BRIAN BLOICE
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SINCE 1964 the Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Society in conjunction with the Southwark Archaeological Excavation Committee has been investigating through documentary research, field-work and excavation, the tinglazed earthenware industry of South London, attempting to discover the whereabouts of the kilns and workshops, the names of the principal potters, the wares they were producing and the types of kilns in use in the 17th and 18th centuries. Starting as it did in 1964 by the finding of pottery fragments from a road trench in Lavington Street, Southwark (TQ 318801)¹, the work has continued in Southwark and Lambeth to build up a picture of the development and decline of this pottery industry, culminating in September 1968 in the first excavation of a delftware kiln in Great Britain.

Tinglazed earthenware is a generic term used to describe the types of pottery usually referred to as maiolica and delftware. Some confusion in terminology still exists, so in this article maiolica is used when describing tinglazed earthenware produced in this country from about 1570 to the end of the 17th century, decorated usually in polychrome, in the style of the wares produced in the Netherlands. The term delftware (small 'd') is used when describing tinglazed earthenware produced in this country from about 1620 until the beginning of the 19th century, decorated predominantly with blue on white in the style of Chinese porcelain.

During the last years of the 16th century, religious wars broke out in the Low Countries, then under the tutelage of the Spanish crown. These events led to the destruction of the South Netherlands maiolica pottery industry based on Antwerp,

1. B. J. Bloice and M. Bennett, *T.B.A.O.G. Newsletter* 25 (1965), 6.



Octagonal plate decorated in blue, dated on the back 1776 and bearing the arms of the Joiners Company

(Photo: London Museum)

which remained under the control of Spain. The potters moved north into what has now become Holland and founded the pottery industry which was later to be centred on Delft. From here or direct from South Netherlands potters also emigrated to England to found the British tinglazed earthenware industry.

In the first years of the 17th century, Dutchmen were breaking the Portuguese monopoly of trade to and from the Far East by the capture of trading posts and Portuguese ships. Some of these ships were carrying loads of Chinese Ming Porcelain which is predominantly white with blue decoration and as a result these were off-loaded by the Dutch on the North-West European market. This type of pottery became fashionable and, in order to survive, the maiolica potters turned to imitating

it, thus giving rise to the type of pottery known as delftware. The early immigrant potters who settled in this country in the late 16th century were initially producing maiolica. Then in the early 17th century they gradually changed over predominantly to a delftware style of decoration and it is probable that it was here in London that this transition and gradual anglicisation took place.

Documentary evidence indicates the existence of two workshops founded by immigrant potters which are probably to be connected with the early development of English tinglazed earthenware. One is associated with the name of Jacob Janson who set up a workshop in Aldgate about 1570, the other workshop has been associated with the potter Christian Wilhelm² who lived in St. Olave's parish, Southwark from about 1617 and it has been suggested that he worked at Pickleherring Quay, where later in 1638 a Thomas Townsend had a pottery.³ This and a slightly later pottery at Montagu Close in St. Saviours Parish, Southwark, continued on into the 18th century. A third pottery in Hopton Street, near Lavington Street proves to have been producing delftware in the 18th century by the finds from the 1964 road trench.

In the latter part of the 17th century delftware workshops were established in Lambeth, probably by potters from Southwark in the neighbourhood of what is now called the Albert Embankment and it was on one of these sites that the kilns to be described later were found. The earliest delftware potter so far discovered in Lambeth is Henry Parker⁴ who owned a pottery there in 1673, but perhaps the most eminent figure in Lambeth's tinglazed earthenware industry was James Barston (see part 2) who led many petitions against the importation of European tinglazed earthenware in the late 17th century. Abigail Griffiths was producing delftware at a pottery in Fore Street, Lambeth in the mid 18th century but unfortunately the early history of this workshop is unknown (Marked Ph on map). A further workshop was established at Mortlake⁵ in the 18th century, and it has been suggested that other workshops existed for the manufacture of this ware at Deptford, Putney, Vauxhall and Wapping.

With the increased production and popularity of cream-coloured earthenware and English porcelain at the end of the 18th century, almost all the delftware factories had ceased production by 1800 although vestiges of the industry did continue in existence until about 1850. Richard Waters of

Lambeth was still manufacturing in 1811 and John Wagstaff of Mortlake ceased production in 1821.

Positive attribution of wares to a workshop can only be made when material derived from an adjacent waste heap is found. These waste heaps were often removed from the immediate workshop area and dumped on nearby open ground. Pottery dumps can be identified as waste from a kiln if they contain distorted and badly fired wares, once fired unglazed and undecorated wares called biscuit, together with kiln furniture, including supports and containers used only within the kiln to separate and protect the pottery.

The late Professor F. H. Garner pioneered this work when he examined many documents⁶, and collected fragments of delftware⁷ in the 1930s from building sites in Lambeth (G on map), which although unstratified are available for study in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Chance finds of Southwark maiolica and delftware have also been encountered and are deposited in the British and Cuming (Southwark) Museums. In 1965 Dr. F. Celoria directed an excavation at a site between Potters Fields and Vine Lane, Southwark (TQ 334801) on an open area, called *Potts Fields* in the 17th century and adjacent to the Pickleherring Quay workshop. The excavation recovered 2 tons of Southwark maiolica and delftware, a fairly representative sample of some of the earliest tinglazed earthenware produced in this country. In 1966 an excavation carried out in Lambeth High Street (S1 on map) (TQ 306788) in the centre of the Lambeth potteries recovered stratified groups of 18th century delftware which it is hoped will enable a type series of wares from this period to be produced.

In May 1968 permission was given by the Receiver of the Metropolitan Police for the Society to observe the building operations of Messrs. Humphreys Ltd. on the site of a new Police centre off Lambeth Road, between Norfolk Row and Pratt Walk (TQ 307789) (S2 on map). Groups of pottery were recovered from time to time by a number of observers, then in September 1968 Mr. J. Cox on one of his regular visits noted that a drag-line had uncovered two areas of ash and brickwork. Permission was immediately given by the contractors for an excavation to be carried out, initially for one Saturday morning but subsequently on the following weekend also. Mr. Potts, the clerk of works and his assistant Mr. Glaze gave generous help during the whole period of the Society's work on the site. The kilns which will be described in a future article, were able to be recorded only as a result of this co-operation.

2. H. Tait, *Connoisseur*, 146 (1960) pt. 1, 36, 147 (1961) pt. II, 22.

3. B. J. Bloice and G. Dawson, *S.L.A.S. Research paper* 1 (1966).

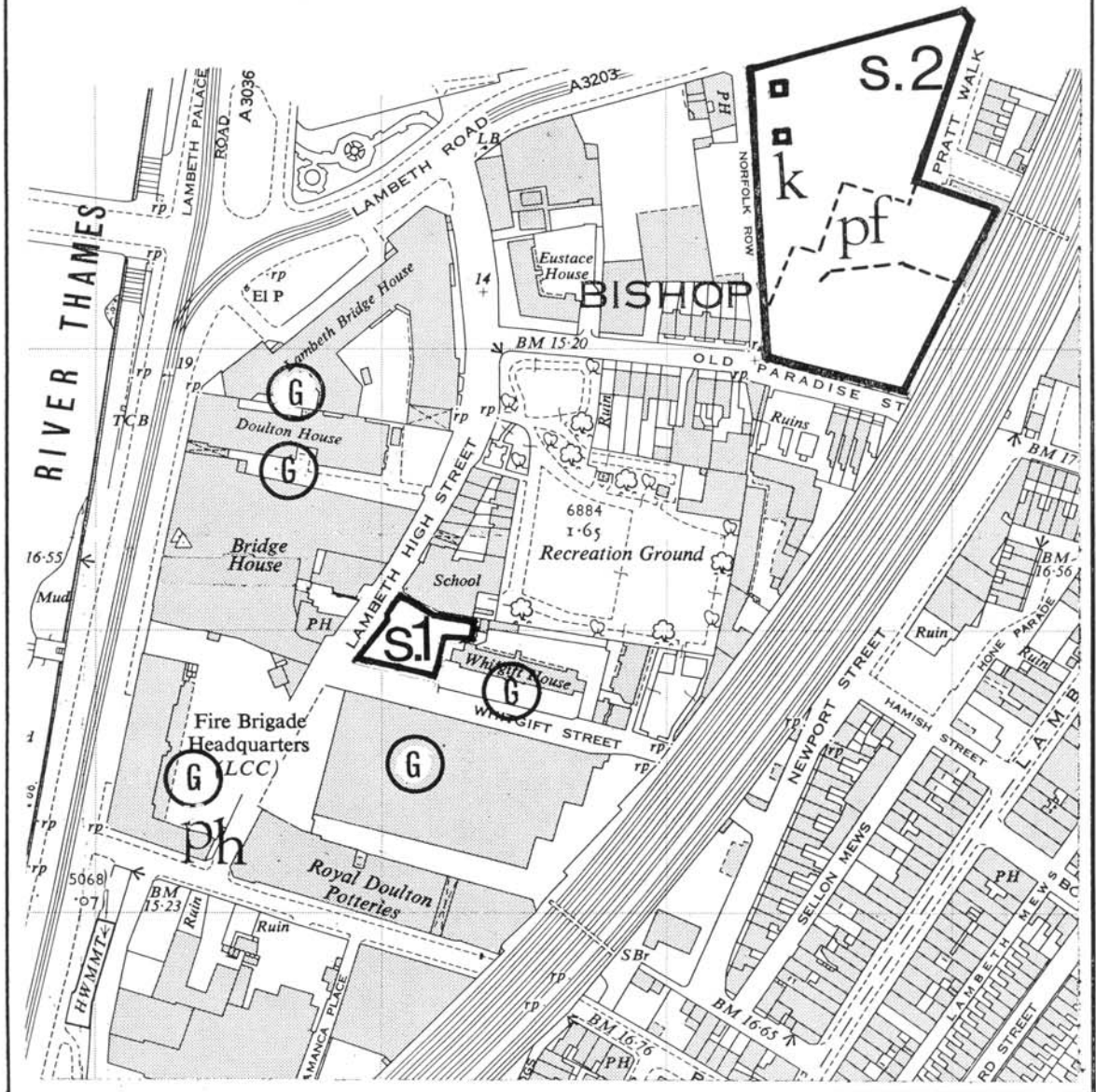
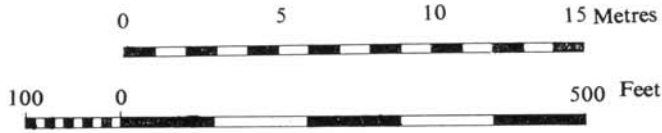
4. J. Ashdown, *S.L.A.S. Newsletter* 12 (1968) 6.

5. B. J. Bloice, *T.B.A.O.G. Newsletter* 26 (1965) 19.

6. F. H. Garner, *Trans. English Ceramic Circle* 9 (1946) 179.

7. F. H. Garner, *Ibid.*, 4 (1937) 43.

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