

Medieval and later Pottery from the Methodist Chapel, Keynsham (MCK97): Report for Publication

Alan Vince

One hundred sherds of medieval and later pottery were recovered from the excavation and were initially assessed by Dr Jane Timby. Twenty-two different wares were identified, of which six were of medieval date and the remainder of post-medieval or early modern date (Appendix).

Medieval Pottery

Three contexts produced stratified medieval pottery (Table 1). That from the putative internal partition, 124, is a small but coherent assemblage of later 12th or early 13th century date (Table 2). That from context 154, the wall trench of the same building, is an even smaller assemblage (Table 3). Two of the sherds are of identical type to those from context 125 whilst the third, a copper-glazed micaceous red earthenware could be of similar date, although it is not of a recognisable ware (MISC MGW). The coarseware from these contexts is of west Wiltshire manufacture and mainly falls into the very fine, micaceous variety typical of late 12th/early 13th-century production (and found at Cheddar Palace, for example, in association with Ham Green ware, Rahtz 1979, Cheddar J).

Sherds of later medieval Bristol wares found in post-medieval deposits are the only evidence for the later medieval occupation of the site (Table 4). The lack of applied strips and the presence of internal glaze probably indicates a late 14th/15th century date for these sherds.

Although a very small collection, this pottery illustrates nicely the position of Keynsham and its medieval trading pattern: in the late 12th/13th century it relied on sources to the east for cooking wares (and probably for the unsourced vessel from context 154) but still obtained glazed wares via Bristol. The presence of two northern French imports in this small collection is worth noting since although these wares are common on coastal sites in the Bristol Channel (such as Chepstow, Vince 1991) and at Bristol itself, they have not been found at Bath and this is their first reported occurrence at Keynsham. By the late medieval period, however, Bristol was supplying both kitchen ware (the bowl) and serving vessels. The growth of the local market for Bristol wares, in comparison with the distribution of the early Ham Green ware, has been noted elsewhere in Bristol's hinterland, for example at Acton Court (Vince forthcoming).

Table 1

Context	Sherds	Period
108	1	Med
125	8	Med
154	3	Med

Table 2 Pottery from context 125

Cname	Form	Sherds	Description
BATH A	CP	2	SOOTED
BATH A	CP	3	SOOTED; VERY MICACEOUS
NFM	JUG	1	INT AND EXT COPPER GLAZE; UNDECORATED
ROUEN	JUG	2	BRIDGE SPOUT; VERTICAL BROWN STRIPS; LEAD GLAZED

Table 3 Pottery from Context 154

Cname	Form	Sherds	Description
-------	------	--------	-------------

BATH A	CP	2 SOOTED
MISC MGW	JUG	1 COPPER GLAZED UNDECORATED FINE MICACEOUS JUG; CF "CROCKERTON" LOW FIRED

Table 4

Context	Cname	Form	Sherds	Description
016	BR	BOWL	1	
108	BR	JUG	1	
117	BR	JUG	1	INT AND EXT GLAZE
117	BR	RIDGE	1	
129	BR	JUG	1	INT AND EXT GLAZE
136	BR	JUG	1	
142	BR	JUG	1	BRIDGE SPOUT

Post-Medieval Pottery

The site produced a larger quantity of post-medieval pottery, which spans the entire period, from the mid 16th century to the mid 18th century (Table 5). There are, unfortunately, no obvious contemporary assemblages without either earlier or later sherds present and the most promising collection of early to mid 18th-century pottery, from contexts 103 and 105, was recovered from a deposit associated with the construction of the church in 1887.

Nevertheless, the main trading links of Keynsham during this period can be reconstructed. In the earliest period represented, probably the mid-late 16th century, the site was supplied with coarsewares from the Malvern Chase potteries (Vince 1977). The type present here (B5) appears to have been first produced during the 1530s and is found in dissolution period deposits but is probably not present in the later 15th to early 16th centuries (which are therefore a blank as far as this site is concerned). In addition to these coarsewares, black-glazed cups, perhaps from rural kilns in south Gloucestershire (such as that whose waste was found at Falfield during construction of the M5 motorway), stoneware drinking jugs from Raeren and Frechen, and an unglazed Saintonge ware pegau with a bucket handle (Hurst 1974). None of the "South Somerset" wares found look as though they are so early and it is probable that at this period Bristol still supplied most of Keynsham's needs for ceramics.

There is only one sherd which is definitely of 17th-century date, a tin-glazed bowl with a lead-glazed back from context 132. However, it is quite likely that much of the South Somerset ware from the site is of similar date, although it could equally be later, especially since almost all the remaining post-medieval wares can be dated to the early to mid 18th century. These include a quantity of slipware vessels, probably of Bristol manufacture (but possibly from Staffordshire); North Devon wares and stoneware from London and Staffordshire and refined red earthenware, also probably from Staffordshire. The precise origin of the South Somerset wares is uncertain, as is the route by which they travelled to the site. They may include Donyatt vessels, traded to Bristol by boat, or Wanstrow wares, carried overland from the Frome area. The 18th-century assemblage is similar in character to those found in Bath, but with a higher quantity of slipware and non-local wares.

Given the small size of the post-medieval pottery assemblage and its wide date range it is not possible to say more, although it is probable that the quantity of imported vessels of mid/late 16th-century date and the absence of 18th-century imports, such as Westerwald stoneware and Chinese porcelain (both common finds in the area), indicates a decline in status of the site.

Table 5

Context	Date
005	mid 17 th / early 18 th C
009	Late 16 th / early 17 th C
103	Early to mid 18 th century (and a single 19 th -century sherd)
105	Early to mid 18 th century (and a single 19 th -century sherd)
119	Mid 16 th to mid 17 th century
130	Later 16 th to 18 th -century
132	Mid/late 17 th century
136	Mid 16 th to mid 17 th century
142	Mid 16 th to mid 17 th century
155	Late 15 th to mid 16 th century

Table 6

Context	Cname	Form	Sherds	Description	period
005	SSOM	BOWL	2	SLIP TRAILED	pmed
009	B5	JUG	1	HANDLE SCAR	pmed
009	FREC	DJ	1		pmed
103	SAIU	PEGAU	1	RIM WITH TRACE OF BUCKET HANDLE	med
103	LONS	TANK	1		pmed
103	NDGT	BOWL	1		pmed
103	SSOM	BOWL	1		pmed
103	SSOM	BOWL	1	SLIP TRAILED	pmed
103	SSOM	PIP	1	HANDLE	pmed
103	STCO	DISH	1	WIDE BROWN SLIP TRAILING	pmed
103	STSL	POSS	1	BASE	pmed
103	STSL	POSS	2	COMBED SLIP EXT	pmed
103	STSL	POSS	8	COMBED SLIP ON EXT	pmed
103	SWSG	TANK	1		pmed
103	TGW	BOWL	3	DAINTY FOOTRING, THIN BLUE LINES AROUND BODY, PLAIN RIM	pmed
103	TGW	PLATE	5	18TH C TYPE (NO FOOTRING, ONLY BLUE DEC)	pmed
105	LONS	TANK	1		pmed
105	NDFW	JUG	1		pmed
105	SSOM	JAR	1		pmed
105	SSOM	JUG	1	PULLED SPOUT; WHITE-SLIPPED EXTERIOR UNDER CLEAR GLAZE; RIBBED NECK	pmed
105	STMO	POSS	1		pmed
105	STSL	POSS	2		pmed

105	TGW	BOWL	1 18TH C	pmed
105	TGW	CHP	1	pmed
105	TGW	PLATE	2 18TH C	pmed
119	B5	JUG	4	pmed
119	CSTN	CUP	1	pmed
119	FREC	-	2	pmed
119	RAER	DJ	1	pmed
119	SSOM	JAR	1 WHITE SLIP TRAILED; LUTED HANDLE STUB	pmed
130	SSOM	JAR	1	pmed
130	SSOM	JUG	1	pmed
132	SSOM	PIP	3 SOOTED WITH ?FOOD DEPOSIT INSIDE	pmed
132	TGW	BOWL	1 LIGHT BLUE AND ORANGE LINES AROUND LIP; LIGHT GREEN AND YELLOW CIRCLE; LEAD-BACKED	pmed
136	B5	JAR	1	pmed
142	B5	JUG	1	pmed
142	CSTN	CUP	1	pmed
142	FREC	DJ	4 MEDALLION AND OAK LEAF SPRIGS, CLOSELY PARALLELED AT 3 NORTHGATE ST, GLOUCESTER (GCM 69/1973)	pmed
142	NDGT	JAR	2	pmed
142	SSOM	BOWL	3	pmed
142	SSOM	JAR	4	pmed
142	SSOM	JUG	2	pmed
142	TGW	CHP	1	pmed
155	RAER	DJ	1	pmed

Early Modern Pottery

Four sherds of 19th century date were found: a pearlware plate with blue feathered edge from context 142; transfer-printed chamber pot sherds from contexts 142 and 103 and a transfer-printed plate sherd from context 105. These say little about the use of the site.

Bibliography

Hurst, J G (1974) Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century imported pottery from the Saintonge, in Evison, V I, Hodges, H & Hurst, J G (eds) *Medieval Pottery from Excavations: Studies presented to Gerald Clough Dunning, with a bibliography of his works*, John Baker, London, 221-56

Rahtz, P A (1979) *The Saxon and Medieval Palaces at Cheddar*, BAR Brit Ser, **65**

Vince, A G (1977) The Medieval and Post-Medieval Ceramic Industry of the Malvern Region; the study of a ware and its distribution, in Peacock, D P S, (ed) *Pottery and Early Commerce*, Academic Press, London, 257-305

Vince, A G (1991) The medieval pottery, in Shoesmith, R, (ed) *Excavations at Chepstow 1973-1974*, Cambrian Archaeol Monogr, **4**, 93-139

Vince, A G (forthcoming) The Pottery, in Bell, R (ed) *Excavations at Acton Court*. HMSO

Appendix

cname	full name	Period	Date range		Broad source	Narrow source	Source	Sherds
BATH A	Bath Fabric A	Med	1000	1350	England	West Wiltshire	Various	7
NFM	North French Monochrome	Med	1150	1350	France	Northern France	various	1
MISC MGW	Unsources: micaceous, green-glazed, wheelthrown	Med	1150	1550				1
ROUEN	Rouen-type Ware	Med	1150	1350	France	Northern France	various	2
BR	Bristol Redcliffe ware	Med	1250	1500	England	Bristol	Bristol Redcliffe	7
SAIU	Saintonge unglazed ware	Med	1250	1550	France	South-west France	Saintonge	1
RAER	Raeren stoneware	Pmed	1450	1600	Belgium	Meuse valley	Raeren	2
CSTN	Cistercian ware	Pmed	1500	1650	England	Gloucestershire		2
B5	Late Malvern Chase glazed ware	Pmed	1530	1640	England	Worcestershire	Malvern Chase	7
FREC	Frechen stoneware	Pmed	1530	1680	Germany	Rhineland	Frechen/Cologne	7
SSOM	South Somerset (Donyatt) ware	Pmed	1550	1900	England	South Somerset	Donyatt	22
NDGT	North Devon Gravel-Tempered ware	Pmed	1600	1900	England	Southwest England	Barnstaple	3
TGW	Tin-glazed ware	Pmed	1640	1770	England	nk	? probably Bristol	14
STCO	Staffordshire combed press-moulded ware	Pmed	1650	1800	England	Staffordshire/Bristol	various	1

NDFW	North Devon Fine ware	Pme d	1650	1900	England	Southwest England	Barnstaple	1
LONS	London Stoneware	Pme d	1670	1800	England	London	various	2
STSL	Staffordshire/Bristol slipware	Pme d	1680	1800	England	Staffordshire	Staffordshire or Bristol	13
STMO	Staffordshire/Bristol mottled-glazed	Pme d	1690	1800	England	Staffordshire	Staffordshire	1
SWSG	Staffordshire White Saltglazed stoneware	Pme d	1700	1770	England	Staffordshire	? numerous sources	1
REFR	Refined Red Earthenware	Emo d	1730	1800	England	various	various	1
TPW	Transfer printed ware	Emo d	1770	1900	England	Staffordshire	? numerous sources	3
PEAR	Pearl ware	Emo d	1770	1900	England	Staffordshire/Bristol	various	1