

## The pottery from the Gilwern to Hafodyrnis pipeline

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### Summary

Five hundred and forty-three sherds of pottery were recovered from fieldwork on the line of the Gilwern to Hafodyrnis pipeline (Site Code GIH02). They weigh in total 6.535Kg and come from no more than 412 vessels (Table 1).

**Table 1**

Sitecode	Sherds	Vessels	Weight (gm)
GIH02 10/57	39	36	845
gih02 11/118	429	314	4897
GIH02 11/58	1	1	1
GIH02 12/71	1	1	3
GIH02 2/11	2	2	4
GIH02 2/12	6	3	22
GIH02 3/100	4	4	28
GIH02 3A/17	47	39	493
GIH02 4/101	9	7	221
GIH02 5/104	1	1	11
GIH02 8/114	3	3	4
GIH02 9/56	1	1	6
Totals	543	412	6535

A single possible medieval sherd was found together with a small quantity of post-medieval pottery, mostly probably early to mid 18<sup>th</sup> century. The majority of the pottery is of late 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century date.

For ease of recovery during analysis each separate vessel from each context was given a separate number, based on the context or finds number and starting at 1. Groups of featureless body sherds were given a single number.

## Description

### Medieval?

A single sherd of possible medieval pottery was recovered, from Plot 3A/17, number 3007. The sherd is heavily abraded and has a fine-textured slightly silty and micaceous fabric no inclusions other than darker brown clay pellets. It is most likely a very abraded piece of medieval or post-medieval pottery, akin to Hereford Fabric A7B or A7D, both of which were made from untempered Devonian marl. At the earliest it might be mid 13<sup>th</sup> century and at the latest it might be mid 18<sup>th</sup> century.

### Post-medieval

Fifty-eight sherds of post-medieval pottery were found. Most of these sherds are of a fine-textured, micaceous red earthenware with no inclusions larger than silt size. Such wares were produced over a wide area of south Wales and the Welsh borderland, from the Herefordshire/Shropshire border, into Gloucestershire west of the Severn and Gwent (PMWB). Without chemical analysis it is not possible to assign vessels to a particular kiln and the isolated location of several of the production sites discovered to date suggests that the potters may in any case have stayed in any one location for a very small period of time. Contrasting with this, however, is the site of Newent Glasshouse, where pottery was being produced for three generations with several different families involved (Vince 1977 #25323). Some of the pieces show features which suggest that they were made at a later date than those in Herefordshire or Gloucestershire, where the last industries ceased production during the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The post-medieval wares come from three sites:

Plot 10/57 produced a single sherd of Post-Medieval Welsh Borderland ware (PMWB).

Plot 11/118 produced 45 sherds of types which were first produced in the post-medieval period. However, all of these are types which continued to be produced later and it is more probable that they are late 18<sup>th</sup> to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century wares. They include a sherd of a Black-glazed ware (BL), a Nottingham Stoneware dish or bowl (NOTS), a Staffordshire mottled-glazed ware chamber pot (STMO, 7 sherds), Staffordshire slipware posset pot(s) (STSL, 4 sherds) and 32 sherds of PMWB vessels, mostly bowls. The latter in particular are large, unabraded sherds and are very probably contemporary with the 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century wares with which they were found. The other sherds are more fragmentary, which might suggest that they are residual. One of the PMWB vessels is slipped inside and out and probably is the rim of a chamber pot of 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup>-century date whilst the STSL sherds include some decorated with circular brown slip blobs, a design which is particularly common in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century, and was produced in Bristol as well as the Staffordshire Potteries.

Plot 3A/17 produced 12 post-medieval sherds, of which three were PMWB, one is a Staffordshire Coarseware vessel (STCOAR), a type which undoubtedly continued to be produced in to the early modern period. One sherd is a Staffordshire Redware dish (STRE), which was originally slipped interally, although both the slip and glaze has flaked off. This type is of mid 17<sup>th</sup> to early 18<sup>th</sup> century date. Six sherds of Staffordshire slipwares were also found, together with a sherd from a white salt-glazed stoneware jug or mid 18<sup>th</sup>-century date.

**Table 2 Post-medieval pottery**

Sitecode	Context	BL	NOTS	PMWB	STCOAR	STMO	STRE	STSL	SWSG	Grand Total
GIH02 10/57	3016			1						1
GIH02 10/57 Total				1						1
gih02 11/118	1132			4				3		7
	1134	1		2						3
	1137			5						5
	1139		1	12		4				17
	1140			5		1				6
	1121			1						1
	1131			2		1				3
	1133			1		1				2
	1135							1		1
gih02 11/118 Total		1	1	32		7		4		45
GIH02 3A/17	3004			1	1		1	1	1	5
	3007			1				4		5
	302			1				1		2
GIH02 3A/17 Total				3	1		1	6	1	12
Grand Total		1	1	36	1	7	1	10	1	58

### Early Modern and later

Four hundred and eighty-four sherds (no more than 365 vessels) of pottery dating to the later 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were recovered. Most of these sherds came from three sites: Plot 11/118 (281 sherds), Plot 10/57 (35 sherds) and Plot 3A/17 (26 sherds). The remaining 28 sherds came from nine separate plots:

#### Plot 2/11

One transfer-printed ware plate. Late 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### Plot 2/12

One transfer-printed plate, one whiteware plate and one whiteware cup. As a group, later 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### Plot 3/100

Four sherds including Creamware and Pearl ware and an unusual stoneware flask. This flask is similar in fabric to Derbyshire stoneware but is not a recognised product of that industry. All the sherds could be early 19<sup>th</sup> century in date.

#### Plot 3A/17

Thirty-four sherds of pottery, representing no more than 26 vessels. The pottery comes from four locations but all contain pottery of later 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup>- century date. Possible late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century pieces are represented by a Creamware jug, and a Pearl ware cup, bowl and plate. The remaining pieces are probably later and include transfer-printed vessels, whiteware vessels, English porcelains (such as bone china) and stoneware jars (of the kind used for jams, marmalades and other preserves). An unusual find is a fragment from a large Parian ware figurine, unglazed and painted with black and red. The fragment is too small to identify the subject.

#### Plot 4/101

Nine sherds (7 vessels). As a group, mid 19<sup>th</sup> century or later. The collection includes two sherds of probable late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century date and a Derbyshire black-leading bottle of unusually small size.

#### Plot 5/104

One sherd of transfer-printed ware plate. The decoration is multi-coloured and the vessel is probably of mid 19<sup>th</sup>-century or later date.

#### Plot 8/114

Three sherds including Creamware, Pearl ware and a fluted transfer-printed plate. There is a very high incidence of fluting on the refined whitewares from plot 11/118 and this sherd may indicate a link of some sort with that site (e.g. farmed by the same farmer, or a local pottery supplier stocking a high quantity of vessels with this decoration or simple a local preference). As a group, these sherds are late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

#### Plot 9/56

One sherd of a whiteware plate decorated with a single blue line around the rim. Probably later 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### Plot 10/57

Thirty-eight sherds from no more than 35 vessels. All are likely to be of late 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century date and include 21 sherds of stoneware preserve jars.

#### Plot 11/58

One whiteware cup. 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## Plot 11/118

Three hundred and eighty-four sherds were recovered from this plot. The finds came from 13 separate contexts. Some of those containing only a handful of sherds have a terminus post quem of late 18<sup>th</sup> century (contexts 1107, 1133, 1138) but the site produced only three small sherds of Creamware but 100 sherds of Pearl ware, coming from no more than 87 vessels. These include a figurine, plates with blue-feathered edges and vessel with hand painted decoration, all of which are potentially of later 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century date. It looks, therefore, as if the first occupation on the site dates to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The remainder of the collection is of later 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup>-century date and includes material in contexts 1114, 1121, 1131, 1132, 1134, 1135, 1137, 1139, 1140 and 1159. There are no types which are diagnostic of the 20<sup>th</sup> century but this may indicate a conservative aesthetic on the part of the users.

The collection consists mainly of refined white wares, including transfer-printed vessels (122 sherds), and other white wares (71 sherds), refined redwares (24 sherds from 1 vessel) and glazed black basalt ware (1 sherd), oriental and English porcelains (2 sherds and 33 sherds respectively). Refined buff kitchen wares which often form a large proportion of 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup>-century assemblages, were rare (7 sherds) as were locally-produced flowerpots (1 sherd). Thirty-three sherds of English stoneware were present, including one black-leading bottle (a type normally found in Derbyshire stoneware), four other bottle sherds and 27 sherds of preserve jars.

Table 3 shows the incidence of pottery by likely function/area of use. It omits the 35 sherds of probably contemporary red earthenwares (PMWB) discussed above. It can be seen that a very high proportion of the assemblage was used for dining or taking tea (although of course a lot of pottery at this period was ostensibly made for these purposes but actually used mainly for display). Much of this pottery is ornate, if not of evidently high quality. Thus, there appears to have been a concentration on display and gentility. Although there is a high quantity of storage vessels, these are exclusively fragments of preserve jar and indeed one is marked on the base 'Not genuine unless bearing Wm P Hartley's label'. William Hartley & Sons began manufacturing jam in 1884 and opened the Bermondsey jam factory in 1902 (<http://www.hartleyfamily.org.uk/Fame4.html>). Another preserve jar base is marked 'ol &' and this too probably indicates the name of the maker of the jar or its contents. This concentration on social eating and drinking and the lack of food preparation vessels (there are no vessels at all which might be expected in a kitchen) requires some explanation. Either it reflects the nature of the refuse or says something about the activities which took place on the site, or the nature of the utensils used in those activities.

A notable feature of the collection is the prevalence of certain decorative traits. Fluting, for example, is present on 22 sherds, of English porcelain, Pearl ware and other white wares. These vessels include dishes, cups and plates. The similarity of the vessels is less than one would expect from a service of crockery but may have been an attempt to replace broken vessels from such a set with similar ones.

Similarly, 16 sherds have gold leaf decoration. Most are English porcelains, but examples in Pearl ware and other white wares are also present. In three cases, these vessels are also fluted.

Thirteen sherds (from no more than 6 vessels) have 'sponged' decoration consisting of stamped patterns, some apparently formless and others simple patterns. Such vessels were apparently produced mainly for the North American market from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

**Table 3**

Group	Total
Grand Total	384
DINING	191
TEA	145
STORAGE	27
BEDROOM	7
NK	4
STORAGE/DRINKING	4

KITCHEN	3
DRINKING	2
CLEANING	1
DISPLAY	1
DRAINAGE	1
GARDEN	1

Seven vessels were represented by sherds in more than one context (cross-fits or sherd-links). The incidence of these links may be helpful in correlating and interpreting the site stratigraphy (Table 4).

The majority of the links are between contexts 1139 and 1140 with other links between 1139 and 1137, 1139 and 1134 and 1139 and 1132.

**Table 4**

Context	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Grand Total
1132		2						2
1134					1			1
1137	1					1		2
1139	9	1	5	3	1	17	1	37
1140			1	1	1	1	1	5
Grand Total	10	3	6	4	3	19	2	47

#### Plot 12/71

One whiteware bowl. 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### Discussion

The pottery suggests that there was little activity (or little activity in which pottery might be used) along the line of the pipeline until the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Even then, only a handful of sherds were present and many of these appear to be late examples of their respective types and possibly actually of later 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century date. Even definite late 18<sup>th</sup> century material is rare, represented by a few sherds of Creamware and a single Pearl ware tankard from site 11/118 decorating with industrial slip. The majority of the pottery, from sites throughout the length of the pipeline, is of 19<sup>th</sup> and probably 20<sup>th</sup>-century date. One remarkable feature is the prevalence of stoneware preserve jars, found in quantity at sites 3A/17, 10/57 and 11/118, whilst another is the nature of the assemblage from site 11/118.