

Assessment of the Clay Tobacco Pipes from Sutton on Sea, Lincolnshire (SOS 05)

Alan Vince

A collection of clay tobacco pipes was recovered from an archaeological excavation at Sutton on Sea carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) Ltd. The pipes all came from a single deposit, context 309, which was the upper fill of a linear ditch, 308.

Description

Clay Tobacco Pipes

Thirty-nine fragments were recovered in total, weighing 222gm. They included four bowls, three fragments of bowls, and two cut mouthpieces. All of the pipes were made from a white-firing clay with few visible inclusions, even at x20 magnification. This clay was clearly slightly organic and the core of many of the pipes is consequently a dark grey colour, sometimes with a light margin around the bore.

The pipes were produced in a two-part mould and after removal from the mould the base of the bowl was sliced off with a knife and a tool was used to scoop out the bowl. This tool has left milling marks on one of the bowls. Finally, a metal wire was used to produce the bore and the extra clay around the mould seams was removed, the mouthpiece was cut and the pipe finished by burnishing.

A single stem was stamped, just behind the bowl, with an "S" in a diamond lozenge.

Four complete bowls were recovered and there were fragments of a further three bowls. All appear to have been very similar in appearance and size. The height, degree of bulbousness and rim diameter are all similar to pipes from Lincoln dated c.1650-80 (1977, in particular No. 53) and to London pipes dated c.1660-80.

Assessment

The pipes were clearly all produced in the same centre and are of the same date. Thus, they represent a single episode of activity in the mid 17th century. The burnishing of the pipes and the diamond-shaped stem mark suggest a Dutch influence or source. On a site on the east coast of Lincolnshire this might well indicate an overseas connection but without further research it is impossible to say what the nature of that connection was.

Bibliography

Mann, J E (1977) *Clay Tobacco Pipes from Excavations in Lincoln*. Lincoln Archaeol Trust
Monograph Series XV-1 London, Council British Archaeol.