

Assessment of the Finds from the Guildhall, Boston, Lincolnshire (BGH'06)

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A small collection of pottery and clay tobacco pipes was recovered from excavations at the Guildhall, Boston, Lincolnshire, undertaken by Field Archaeology Specialists Ltd. The finds are mainly of mid 18th-century date with a few residual later medieval sherds.

Description

Clay Tobacco Pipes

Forty-three fragments of clay tobacco pipe were recorded. Of these, most were undecorated stem fragments. Seven had bore diameters typical of early to mid 17th-century pipes; twelve had bore diameters typical of later 17th and 18th-century pipes and twenty had bore diameters typical of 18th to 19th-century pipes.

One stem fragment with a roller-stamped mark was present. The mark incorporates the initials GL. The style of the mark suggests an 18th-century date and no Lincolnshire makers are known with these initials (G Taylor pers comm). It is therefore likely that this pipe arrived in Boston as a result of sea-borne trade. The mark should be recorded (an impression made using modelling clay and then photographed) so that it may be possible to identify the maker and his place of work at a later date.

Two fragments of bowl were present. One is a mid to late 18th-century spurred pipe similar to Mann No.154 (Mann 1977). The other is also similar to Mann No.154 but has raised initials on the spur, G and L. It is tempting to think that this is the same maker as the GL on the stamped stem.

Pottery

The pottery was identified and recorded using the codes adopted for the city of Lincoln pottery archive (Young and Vince 2006). The codes used are listed in Table 1.

Medieval

Two sherds of medieval pottery were recovered. One is of Nottingham Glazed ware, which is common in central Lincolnshire in the later 13th and 14th centuries (Young and Vince 2006) whilst the other is a sherd of unglazed Saintonge ware. Unglazed, or sparsely-glazed Saintonge vessels are typical of the later 14th, 15th and early 16th centuries and were normally either large three-handled jugs – termed pegaux in the English literature (it is apparently a piece of cod-French) – or bucket-handled jugs (e.g. Hurst 1974).

Post-Medieval

Eleven sherds of post-medieval pottery were recovered. Four are of various unidentified red earthenwares (BERTH, GRE and SLIP), probably of Lincolnshire origin, although the slipped

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vessel, a bowl, has a turned exterior, a feature adopted by country potters following its introduction in factory products in the early 18th century. The remainder are mainly of standard 18th-century factory products. With the exception of a Nottingham stoneware (NOTS) tankard, they probably from Staffordshire (although other sources produced almost identical forms made from very similar clays). These are STCO, STSL and two sherds of SWSG plate. The STSL vessel has a panel of combed slip on the side. The stoneware plates were a form introduced in the 1750s and superceded by Creamware in the second half of the 1760s. The final sherd is from a porcelain teacup. The vessel is handled, unlike most Chinese cups of the 17th and 18th centuries, has a fluted body, blue painted decoration around the outside of the footring and a blue mark on the base. It is probably a European vessel although could probably be identified by a specialist.

Table 1

Cname	Full Name	Young & Vince 2006
BERTH	Brown-glazed Earthenware	p.232-3
ENPO	English Porcelain	
GRE	Glazed Red Earthenware	p.232
NOTG	Nottingham Glazed ware	p.127, 133, 172
NOTS	Nottingham Stoneware	
PIPECLAY	Pipeclay	
SAIU	Unglazed Saintonge ware	
SLIP	Misc Slipped red earthenwares	p.233
STCO	Staffordshire Press-moulded Slipware	
STSL	Staffordshire Yellow-glazed Slipware	
SWSG	English White Salt-Glazed ware	

Assessment

Stratigraphy

The material came from four contexts which could be assigned dates based on the latest types present (tpqs) as follows:

1025 – c.1750+

1050 – c.1750+

1053 – a chip of clay tobacco pipe without a measureable bore diameter dates this deposit, which produced the two medieval sherds, to the late 16th century or later.

1054 – c.1750+

The lack of Creamware suggests that if these are contemporary assemblages then none of the deposits are later than the late 1760s, although the assemblages are not large enough for this argument to carry much weight.

Interpretation

The finds include vessels of reasonably high quality (the white salt-glazed stoneware and the porcelain cup) and these vessels may have been used in the Guildhall during the mid 18th century and been incorporated into the archaeological deposits during building work in the mid 18th century.

Further work

The two marked pipes should be recorded, by photography following the production of an impression of the stem mark.

The porcelain cup would repay photography and the circulation of the photographs to specialists in oriental and English porcelain of the mid 18th century.

None of the other finds require further work.

Costing

Production of impression - £24.00 plus VAT

Digital Photography and dissemination of images by email - £48.00 plus VAT

Production of report - £24.00 plus VAT

Total - £86.00 plus VAT

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Context	Action	class	REFNO	Cname	Subfabric	Description	Form	Part
1025		POTTERY	4	SWSG			PLATE	B
1025		POTTERY	4	BERTH			RECT DISH	B
1050		PIPECLAY	5	PIPECLAY		17TH CENTURY BORE	CLAYPIPE	BS
1050		PIPECLAY	5	PIPECLAY		18-19TH CENTURY BORE	CLAYPIPE	BS
1050		PIPECLAY	5	PIPECLAY		17-18TH CENTURY BORE	CLAYPIPE	BS
1053		POTTERY	3	NOTG			JUG	BS
1053		PIPECLAY	3	PIPECLAY			CLAYPIPE	BS
1053		POTTERY	3	SAIU			PEGAU	BS
1054		POTTERY	8	NOTS	BROWN SLIP		TANK	R
1054	PH	PIPECLAY	1	PIPECLAY		17-18TH CENTURY BORE; 'GL' ROUND STEM TOGETHER WITH DEC	CLAYPIPE	STEM
1054		POTTERY	8	STSL		COMBED DEC	POSSET	BS
1054		PIPECLAY	7	PIPECLAY		M-L18 MANN 154	BOWL, STEM	BS
1054		PIPECLAY	1	PIPECLAY		17-18TH CENTURY BORE	CLAYPIPE	STEM
1054		PIPECLAY	7	PIPECLAY		17TH CENTURY BORE	CLAYPIPE	STEM
1054		POTTERY	8	SWSG			PLATE	R
1054	PH	PIPECLAY	1	PIPECLAY		M-L18; MANN 154; G ON ONE SIDE SPUR, L ON OTHER	CLAYPIPE	BOWL, SPUR
1054	PH	POTTERY	8	ENPO		TRACE OF HANDLE; FLUTED BODY; BLUE HAND DEC EXT AROUND FOOTRING AND MARK ON BASE	CUP	B
1054		PIPECLAY	7	PIPECLAY		17-18TH CENTURY BORE	CLAYPIPE	STEM
1054		POTTERY	8	GRE			BOWL	BS
1054		PIPECLAY	7	PIPECLAY		18-19TH CENTURY BORE	CLAYPIPE	STEM
1054		POTTERY	8	BERTH			BOWL	R
1054		POTTERY	8	SLIP		TURNED BASE	BOWL	B
1054		POTTERY	8	STCO			DISH	R;BS

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