

# **CLAY TOBACCO PIPES FROM EXCAVATIONS AT GLASTONBURY ABBEY, SOMERSET, 1904-1979**

*Dr D A Higgins*

*8 June 2011; Revised 13 February 2013*

## **INTRODUCTION**

This report deals with the clay tobacco pipes that were studied as part of a project to review the finds from excavations at Glastonbury Abbey that took place between 1904 and 1979. The pipes were examined and this report prepared by the author between July 2010 and June 2011, with minor revisions in February 2013.

## **MATERIAL RECOVERED AND METHODOLOGY**

A total of 24 fragments of clay tobacco pipe were included in this study, comprising 16 bowls and 8 stem fragments. Some of these pieces could be attributed to specific excavations undertaken during the 1950s and 1960s but the majority either date from pre-1951 excavations or are now unstratified.

Although not specifically included in this study, the site museum also holds a collection of other pipes from the site, which probably derive either from gardening activity or as unstratified finds from earlier excavations (one of these pieces is recorded as having been found in the reredorter drain in 1934). This collection was put together during the 1980s by Charles Hollinrake from stray finds in the museum and is stored in a box labelled 'Radford Box 15 – Clay Pipes'. When examined, there was nothing written on the pipes themselves, but they were either individually bagged, or in small groups, with a slip of paper giving a reference number relating to sketches prepared by Charles Hollinrake. These numbered slips run from 23-90, in addition to which there was a bag of 22 plain pipe fragments, which it has been assumed are the missing pieces 1-22. There was also a bag with nine further unnumbered pieces, which have been added to the sequence as 91-99. A pencil reference number has now been added to each of these pieces so as to provide a unique reference for the individual fragments and they have been briefly reviewed for this study since they provide an important body of comparative material for the excavated pieces. The unstratified finds comprise 96 pipe bowl fragments (71 of which are marked), two stem fragments and part of an eighteenth century hair curler with a crowned IB stamp on it. Almost all of the pipes date from the seventeenth century. Where any of these unstratified finds are referred to below, they are given as U/S 1 to U/S 99.

The 24 fragments that form the focus of this study are generally poorly provenanced and most do not form part of larger context groups, which limits the accuracy with which they can be interpreted in relation to the archaeological deposits themselves. The individual fragments, however, can often be accurately identified and dated, and shed light on the continued interest in the site, and its connections with the wider region, following the dissolution. Each of the 24 fragments has been individually examined and details logged onto an Excel table, a copy of which has been deposited as part of the site archive. The recording system that was used is based on that developed at the University of Liverpool (Higgins & Davey 2004). All of the pipe fragments were examined and logged before the any other details regarding the history or archaeology of the site were considered. This methodology avoids pre-conceptions being formed as to the date of nature of the pipes being recorded.

## DISCUSSION

Most of the context groups are too small to provide reliable dating evidence, although the fragments certainly provide an indication of the possible context date as well as a *terminus post quem* for the deposits in which they occur. One of the pipe bowl fragments (Fig 10) was found in a scaffold hole, and so provides dating evidence for this feature. It is stamped with the mark of Richard Greenland, who was working c1670-1710, but may well date from c1670-90, when this mark was most frequently used. Overall the pipe fragments range from c1590-1910 in date, but with a marked concentration of pieces dating from the mid-seventeenth century through to the early eighteenth century. This may be in part due to a collecting bias, which has clearly favoured the retention of bowls, many of which are substantially complete. Later bowls, with their thinner walls, are more prone to fragmentation and very few stems have been collected, which would have provided another means of checking the range and consistency of the groups. A summary of the pipe evidence is provided in Table 1 below.

Acc No	Assigned No	B	S	M	Tot	Date Range	Christian name	Surname	Fig	Comments
GLSGA:1991/147	P 442		5		5	1610-1850				Four stem fragments of C17th date, one of which is burnished, and a later unburnished stem of around 1750-1850.
GLSGA:1991/147	P 442	1			1	1670-1690	IOHN	SIMES		Damaged bowl but with traces of milling surviving and what appears to have been a simple cut rim. There are clear mould flaws around the base of the heel on the left hand side.
GLSGA:1991/147	P 442	1			1	1700-1850				Rim fragment only, from a bowl of C18th or early C19th date
GLSGA:1991/354/3	M 97	1			1	1670-1710	RICH	GREENLAND	10	Just the heel area survives from a late C17th style bowl with an incuse stamped mark reading RICH/GREN/LAND. Greenland died in 1710 but the majority of his marked pipes date from c1670-90.
GLSGA:1991/411	M 56	1			1	1640-1670	H	C	2	Heel fragment from a poor quality mould with lop-sided stem and uneven surface. Rather a thin stem and lop-sided heel. Mark boldly cut and clearly stamped but from a fairly simply executed die.
GLSGA:1991/431	M 57	1			1	1650-1680	E	T	4	Almost complete heel bowl of local style with a poorly impressed mark reading ET with a small flower between the initials and others above and below them. The whole bowl has been badly burnt and is discoloured black. It appears to have been poorly burnished, but this is hard to see because of the burning.
GLSGA:1991/513	M 118		1		1	1640-1710				

GLSGA:1991/ 56/3	P 58 - 1		1		1	1760- 1910				Plain stem fragment of c1760-1910 type with one end freshly broken.
GLSGA:1991/ 609	M 122		1		1	1750- 1910				Plain stem fragment of c1750-1910 type.
GLSGA:1991/ 64/6	P 77 - 1	1			1	1660- 1680			7	Unmarked local heel form of average quality.
GLSGA:1991/ 64/6	P 77 - 2	1			1	1830- 1880	J	S	13	Damaged spur bowl with fluted decoration and leaf seams. The seam away from the smoker is poorly moulded and may have leaves and acorns decorating it - the other seam is leaves only. There are poorly moulded initials on the spur that appear to read JS.
GLSGA:1991/ 64/6	P 77 - 3	1			1	1690- 1730			12	Local spur form with a thick and chunky bowl and pronounced flare to the rim. The base of the heel has been trimmed. The bowl has been competently but quite roughly finished and it is only of average quality.
GLSGA:1991/ 66/5	P 198 - 1	1			1	1700- 1740	W	-	11	Fragment from a bowl with a thick, chunky stem and walls. Part of a cartouche mark survives on the right hand side (left is missing), with the Christian name initial W within a serrated border.
GLSGA:1991/ 72/4	P 295 - 1	1			1	1670- 1690	IOHN	SIMES	9	Local heel form with a competent but rather plain finish. Half the rim survives, none of which is milled.
GLSGA:1991/ 72/4	P 295 - 2	1			1	1660- 1680	IEFFRY	HVNT	6	Neat West Country style bowl with light but good burnish. About half the rim survives, almost all of which is milled. The mark is very poor both in terms of the die and the impression but it is probably the same as an example with a different bowl form (P 114 - 1). The mark would probably have read IEF/FRY.H/VNT originally.
GLSGA:1991/ 72/4	P 295 - 3	1			1	1690- 1740				Bowl fragment from a large local style of c1690- 1740. The rim has been cut but also appears to have been lightly bottered and all the surviving part (about a half) has been milled. This would have been a large and thin- walled West Country form originally.

GLSGA:1991/ 89/1	P 114 - 1	1			1	1660- 1680	IEFFRY	HVNT	5	Heel bowl with a slightly uneven form and surface and generally rather poor finish. The heel stamp has been poorly impressed so that the lettering is incomplete but it would probably have read IEF/FRY.H/VNT originally. This mark is probably the same as an example with a different bowl form (P 295 - 2).
GLSGA:1991/ 89/1	P 114 - 2	1			1	1670- 1710			8	Unmarked local heel form - almost complete but all the rim chipped away. The bowl has not been burnished and is of poor quality with uneven surface and heavy-handed finishing.
GLSGA:1991/ 89/1	P 114 - 3	1			1	1650- 1670	FLOWER	HVNT	3	Part of a bowl with quite a strong West Country style and neat finish. The mark has fine, neatly cut lettering reading FLO/WER.H/VNT.
GLSGA:1991/ 89/1	P 114 - 4	1			1	1590- 1610			1	A very early bowl form with a long, thin body. The rim has been bottered but not milled and the stem had a light grey reduced core. The pipe is made of a fabric with very fine mica and sandy inclusions in it.
<b>Total</b>		<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>24</b>					

*Table 1 - Summary of the clay tobacco pipe evidence, showing the numbers of bowl (B), stem (S) and mouthpiece (M) fragments recovered in each group. The overall date range represented within each group is also listed (Date Range), as well as details of any makers' marks and the figure numbers of any illustrated pieces.*

The excavations have produced one very early pipe bowl that dates from c1590-1610 (Fig 1). Tobacco was still an expensive luxury at this date and bowls of this form are very rare nationally. The museum collection includes another early bowl of this type (U/S 63) and a slightly later but very good quality Gauntlet pipe of c1620-50 with a finely burnished surface (U/S 82). Pipes made by the Gauntlet family of Amesbury were renowned for their outstanding quality and sold for many times the price of ordinary pipes (Atkinson 1965, 95; Walker 1977, 417-8; Lewcun 1990, 23-4). It is clear that high status material was being used and discarded on the site during the late sixteenth to early seventeenth century. It is also notable that the earliest Glastonbury bowls have quite a tall, slender form, which contrasts with more dumpy early forms generally found in London (Atkinson & Oswald 1969, Bowl Types 1-3). This difference hints at the early development of regional styles, which would, in turn, imply that local production was taking place in this area at an early date.

The majority of the pipes, however, date from c1640-1730 (Figs 2-12), a chronological range that is also reflected in the much larger museum sample. The presence of these pipes shows that the Abbey continued to attract visitors throughout the Post-Medieval period, while the origin of the pipes reflects the areas from which people travelled and/or goods were traded. A total of eight stamped seventeenth century marks and two later moulded marks were present in the excavated sample, and these are shown in Table 2.

Mark	No	Date	Origin	Fig	Comments
H C	1	1640-1670		2	
RICH GREENLAND	1	1670-1710	Norton St Philip	10	Died 1710
FLOWER HVNT	1	1650-1670	Bristol	3	Free 1651, Died 1671/2
IEFFRY HVNT	2	1660-1680	Norton St Philip	5, 6	Died 1690
J S (moulded)	1	1830-1880	Bath	13	Joseph Sants, recorded working from 1835; Died 1877
IOHN SIMES	2	1670-1690	Mid-Somerset	9	
ET	1	1650-1680		4	
W... (moulded)	1	1700-1740	?Shepton Mallet	11	Possibly William Champion, who died in either 1728 or 1730

*Table 2 – Marked pipes from the excavations.*

The marked pipes clearly reflect the movement of people and goods over a considerable area of the surrounding countryside, with examples coming from a variety of sources including Bristol, some 23 miles to the north and Norton St Philip, some 20 miles to the north-east. The larger museum collection also includes material from Stratton-on-the-Fosse or Shepton Mallet (George But), Taunton (EC), Chard (George Webb), which lies some 22 miles to the south-west and Amesbury (Gauntlet pipe), which lies some 42 miles to the east. Overall, it is clear that pipes were regularly reaching the Abbey from up to 25 miles in all directions, with occasional examples coming from much further, thus giving a very large catchment area for the site.

One of the principal supply sources was Norton St Philip, as represented by the pipes of Jeffry Hunt (Figs 5 & 6) and Richard Greenland (Fig 10). Norton St Philip was a major pipe making centre (Lewcun 1985) and the larger museum collection includes a further 11 or 12 examples of Jeffry Hunt pipes and 14 or 15 Richard Greenland pipes. The pipes of Greenland are, in fact, the most abundant of any maker in the Abbey collection and so it is interesting to note that none of his pipes were recovered during the project at Shapwick, which lies just some 5 miles west of Glastonbury (Lewcun 2007, 676). Conversely, pipes made by John Burrow, who worked somewhere in the Taunton / Bridgwater / Wells area, were the most common marks of this period at Shapwick (Lewcun 2007, 675) and yet are totally absent from amongst the Abbey collections. Similarly, there are a total of four pipes marked 'IOHN SIMES' in the Abbey collections (e.g., Fig 9), whereas six examples recovered during the Shapwick survey are all stamped with a different style of mark reading 'John Symes'. Lewcun (in prep.) considers that these represent two different makers, with the SIMES marks being produced somewhere in mid-Somerset. These examples clearly shows that complex marketing patterns exist within the broader 25 mile catchment area demonstrated by the pipes from this site and that a more detailed analysis of the entire Abbey collection would clearly be worthwhile.

There are a few fragments of late seventeenth or early eighteenth-century pipe from amongst the excavated material, including part of a bowl with a relief moulded cartouche mark on its right hand side (Fig 11). This style of marking was particularly used in Bristol, but was also copied by makers in surrounding areas. Only the Christian name initial survives, but the bowl has a chunky heel form, suggesting local production rather than Bristol, and this is possibly part of a bowl made by William Champion of Shepton Mallet, who died in either 1728 or 1730 (Lewcun 2007, 676). There are a couple of other pipes with WC cartouche marks in the larger Abbey collection (U/S 38 & 39) which may also be by this maker.

Nineteenth pipes are very poorly represented amongst the excavated bowls, the only definite example being a fluted bowl with leaf decorated seams and some poorly impressed maker's initials, which are probably JS (Fig 13). This pipe can be attributed to Joseph Sants of Bath, who is recorded working from 1835 until his death in 1877 and whose pipes are widely distributed across the county (Marek Lewcun, pers. com. 2012). There are, however, one or two later stems amongst the excavated finds and it seems likely that pipes of this period are under-represented in the retained sample from the earlier excavations. The same is true of the larger unstratified collection, although

this does include a few interesting later pieces, including some large fluted bowls that were probably produced locally (U/S 33-35) and a bowl with a FORD stamp from London (U/S 73). This last piece reflects increased accessibility and the ever widening connections to the site that were possible following the introduction of the railways – a trend that has continued to this day.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author is particularly grateful to Dr Susie White for producing the pipe illustrations for this paper. The die details were drawn by the author.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

The pipes are all shown at life size with the mark details at twice life size. Burnished surfaces are shown with a light broken line and chipped sections with a stipple. The Higgins die numbers given for individual marks are taken from the as yet unpublished national catalogue of pipe marks that is being compiled by the author. The die details with figures 3, 5, 9 and 10 are taken from the national catalogue to show the marks used on the pipes but are not drawn from the actual Glastonbury examples.

**Fig 1** Pipe bowl of *c*1590-1610 with a bottered rim (unmilled). The surface has a fine burnish and the stem bore measures 6/64". This is a very early bowl form with a long, thin body and the stem had a light grey reduced core. The pipe is made of a fabric with very fine mica and sandy inclusions in it. GLSGA:1991/89/1 (P 114 - 4).

**Fig 2** Unburnished pipe bowl of *c*1640-1670 with a stem bore of 8/64". The relief stamped maker's mark reads H C (Higgins Die No 2195). The pipe is made from a poor quality mould with a lop-sided and rather thin stem with an uneven surface. The mark is boldly cut and clearly stamped but is from a fairly simply executed die. From Abbot's Hall cross trench, 3'8" deep and 111' from the north end of the trench (1962). GLSGA:1991/411 (M 56).

**Fig 3** Pipe bowl of *c*1650-1670 with an average burnish and a stem bore of 8/64". The incuse stamped maker's mark with fine, neatly cut lettering reads FLOWER HVNT (Higgins Die No 2119) for the Bristol maker of this name (Free in 1651 and died 1671/2). The bowl form has quite a strong West Country style and neat finish. GLSGA:1991/89/1 (P 114 - 3).

**Fig 4** Pipe bowl of *c*1650-1680 with a bottered rim (not milled). The surface has a poor burnish and the stem bore measures 8/64". The bowl is of a local style with a poorly impressed incuse mark reading ET with a small flower between the initials and others above and below them (Higgins Die No 2209). The whole bowl has been badly burnt and is discoloured black. From Abbot's Hall cross trench, west extension, 12'-17' (1962). GLSGA:1991/431 (M 57).

**Fig 5** Pipe bowl of *c*1660-1680 with a bottered and fully milled rim. The surface has a poor burnish; the stem bore is unmeasurable. The incuse stamped maker's mark reads IEFFRY HVNT (Higgins Die No 1016) for the Norton St Philip maker of this name who died in 1690 (Lewcun 2007, 675). The bowl has a slightly uneven surface with a generally rather poor finish. It has a rather dumpy, barrel shaped form and the heel stamp has been poorly impressed so that the lettering is incomplete. This mark is the same as that on Figure 6, which has a notably different bowl form. GLSGA:1991/89/1 (P 114 - 1).

**Fig 6** Pipe bowl of *c*1660-1680 with a bottered and milled rim. The surface has a good burnish and

the stem bore measures 8/64". The incuse stamped maker's mark reads IEFFRY HVNT (Higgins Die No 1016) for the Norton St Philip maker of this name who died in 1690 (Lewcun 2007, 675). This is a neat West Country style bowl with light but good burnish. About half the rim survives, almost all of which is milled. The mark is very poor both in terms of the die and the impression but it appears to be the same as that on Figure 5, which has a notably different bowl form. GLSGA:1991/72/4 (P 295 - 2).

**Fig 7** Unmarked local heel form of c1660-1680 with a bottered and fully milled rim. The surface has an average burnish and the stem bore measures 8/64". The whole pipe is only of average quality. From pre-1951 excavations. GLSGA:1991/64/6 (P 77 - 1).

**Fig 8** Unmarked local heel form of c1670-1710, which is almost complete but with all the rim chipped away. The surface is unburnished and the stem bore measures 7/64". The bowl is of poor quality with uneven surface and heavy-handed finishing. GLSGA:1991/89/1 (P 114 - 2).

**Fig 9** Pipe bowl of c1670-1690 with a bottered rim. The surface is unburnished and the stem bore measures 8/64". The incuse stamped maker's mark reads IOHN SIMES (Higgins Die No 2207) for a maker of this name who appears to have been working in the mid-Somerset area (Lewcun, in prep.). This is a local heel form with a competent but rather plain finish. Half of the rim survives, none of which is milled. GLSGA:1991/72/4 (P 295 - 1).

**Fig 10** Pipe fragment of c1670-1710. The surface has a good burnish and the stem bore measures 8/64". The incuse stamped maker's mark reads RICH/GREN/LAND (Higgins Die No 2199) for the Norton St Philip maker of this name who died in 1710. This mark type is most frequently found on bowls of c1670-90 and so this example may well date from the earlier part of his career. From Trench 1, south of the Lady Chapel, from a (late) scaffold hole, approximately 8' south, 2' west and 3' deep. GLSGA:1991/354/3 (M 97).

**Fig 11** Pipe fragment of c1700-1740. The surface is unburnished and the stem bore measures 6/64". Part of a relief moulded cartouche mark survives on the right hand side (the left hand side is missing), with the Christian name initial W within a serrated border. Possibly made by William Champion of Shepton Mallet, who died in either 1728 or 1730 (Lewcun 2007, 676). GLSGA:1991/66/5 (P 198 - 1).

**Fig 12** Pipe bowl of c1690-1730 with a bottered but unmilled rim. The surface is unburnished and the stem bore measures 6/64". This is a local spur form with a thick and chunky bowl and pronounced flare to the rim. The base of the spur has been trimmed. The bowl has been competently but quite roughly finished and it is only of average quality. From pre-1951 excavations. GLSGA:1991/64/6 (P 77 - 3).

**Fig 13** Damaged spur bowl of c1830-1880 with fluted decoration and leaf seams. This has a cut rim and is not milled. The surface is unburnished and the stem bore measures 5/64". The seam away from the smoker is poorly moulded and may have had both leaves and acorns decorating it. The other seam has leaves only. There are poorly moulded initials on the spur that appear to read JS, which can be attributed to Joseph Sants of Bath, who is recorded working from 1835 until his death in 1877 (Marek Lewcun, pers. com. 2012). From pre-1951 excavations. GLSGA:1991/64/6 (P 77 - 2).

## REFERENCES

Atkinson, D R, 1965, 'Clay Tobacco Pipes and Pipemakers of Marlborough', *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine* **60**, 85-95

- Atkinson, D R and Oswald, A, 1969. 'London Clay Tobacco Pipes', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, **32**, 171-227
- Gerrard, C with Aston, M, 2007. *The Shapwick Project, Somerset: a Rural Landscape Explored*, Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph **25**, Leeds
- Higgins, D A and Davey, P J, 2004. 'Appendix 4: Draft Guidelines for using the Clay Tobacco Pipe Record Sheets,' in White 2004, 487-90
- Lewcun, M, 1985. 'The Hunt Family Identified', *Society for Clay Pipe Research Newsletter*, **8**, 14-21
- Lewcun, M, 1990, 'Comparative Pipe Prices in the Seventeenth Century: A Salisbury Inventory', *Society for Clay Pipe Research Newsletter* **28**, 23-24.
- Lewcun, M, 2007. 'Clay Pipes and Objects', in Gerrard with Aston 2007, 673-79
- Lewcun, M, in prep. 'Somerset Clay Pipes and Pipe Makers'.
- Walker, I C, 1977. *Clay Tobacco Pipes, with Particular Reference to the Bristol Industry*, Parks Canada, Ottawa (4 Vols; 1939pp)
- White, S D, 2004. *The Dynamics of Regionalisation and Trade: Yorkshire Clay Tobacco Pipes c 1600-1800*, British Archaeological Reports, British Series 374, Oxford