

Notes on a range of finds from 12 Goslett Yard, London Borough of Camden, WC2 (TGC09)

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The finds are summarised by material and function, including bulk and accessioned finds together. They comprise a large assemblage of bottle glass and a range other items, some of an industrial nature.

Ceramic

The base and lower body of a large thick-walled crucible (<34>; weight 540g) was found in [127]; this is in a buff-coloured fabric and has an incised horizontal line around the body (?post-firing).

Context [34] contained a large cake of solidified matter that may be the contents of a crucible (<33>; diameter c 220mm, thickness up to 4mm). This should perhaps more correctly be classed as slag.

Copper alloy

The only stratified find is a single dress pin <14>, found in [59].

Of interest is an oval brass plate (<28>, unstratified) with eyes for attachment on either side. The lettering in relief reads / J. & E.HALL, L^D / MAKERS. / REFERENCE N^O / M323 / DARTFORD, ENGLAND / on a cross hatched background and within flat border. J and E Hall were established in 1785 as maker of foundry equipment but later branched into refrigeration, supplying ships and warehouses, hospitals and hotels with cold storage facilities from the early 20th century onwards. The present find is from such a storage unit. Another development was in transportation, including chassis for busses and lorries, lifts and escalators.

Iron

A near complete iron paddle was found in [43]; its length is now 420mm, but was probably up to 450mm; the bowl/blade is now 160 x 18mm but was probably a bit longer than this. The handle is a simple shaft with round-section and bevelled heel. This is probably a 19th- or 20th-century piece of equipment.

An unstratified find is a large rectangular plate (30 x 13mm) from a cold storage unit (<27>) with eyes for fixing to the wall at the mid-point of either side, and octagonal bolts that secure a separate element on the back, made of folded sheet metal and apparently designed to grip a rectangular object. The front bear the words /J&E HALL L^{TD} / DARTFORD / with B1 in the bottom right corner; at the centre of the right side is a smaller plate (60 x 30mm), held in place by round-headed screws. The incised lettering (upside down in relation to the main panel), reads / USE MINERAL / OIL ONLY / VACUUM DTE AA /. See above for more details on this company.

In addition, an iron nail was found in context [43], and two others in [129] (from sieved sample {4}).

Glass

Bulk glass was present in a most contexts. The assemblage is of interest in it most can be related to the Cross and Blackwell business, and because a number of pieces with lettering or symbols in relief, usually on the underside of the base. Large amounts were found in [36], [43] and [149]. The following is based on a quick scan of the finds, and so no quantification is possible at this stage. Most bottles and jars are in natural green glass but a smaller group is in colourless glass; a few are bright green and one or two are in a bright blue-green glass.

Wine bottles

The earliest bottle glass is from [149], which contained fragments of possible shaft-and-globe bottle dating to the late 17th century. The rim/neck of an onion/mallet bottle (residual) was found in [43], while context [127] contained a base fragment from a mallet bottle of squat cylindrical bottle dating to the mid 18th century. Part of the base of a similar bottle was found in [59]. A large, slightly oval base from [119] is flatter than most bottles; from its size it should be from a mallet bottle or perhaps a carboy-type form. Context [36] contains 19th-century green glass including a small base and a neck/rim made in a two-part mould (neck/rim),

Soft drink bottles

Context [49] contained three bottles bottles with cylindrical bodies and concave necks that probably contained ginger beer (two complete and one near complete) and a bottle sold by Batey and Co that would also have contained ginger beer made by William Batey in the factory established by him c 1853 at 216 Kingsland Rd (on the east side, south of the Regents canal), which used bottles of stoneware as well as glass. Following Batey's bankruptcy in 1881 the company was purchased on 5th October 1882 by Robert George Alabaster, manufacturer of mineral water, who registered 'Batey and Co' on 17th December 1886 and established the brand as a limited company in 1887. His sons John and Richard James Alabaster (d 1937) were directors of the company, although also producing drinks under their own name 'J & R.J Alabaster, London'. An advertisement of 1910 shows Batey's as John Bull's favourite ginger beer.

Sauce bottles

Bottles with a rectangular body with bevelled corners are usually associated with medicines, but here they were clearly used for sauces. The most obvious example is a find from [34] (complete body, neck/rim missing) that has part of the original label, indicating that it contained Mushroom Catsup made by Crosse and Blackwell's. A complete bottle of this type from [36] has the initials / C&B / in relief at the base of one of the main faces, with / KE / on the underside of the base. The body of another was found in [36]. A cylindrical bottle from [149] has the words / LEA & PERRINS / down the side. Another more complete example also has the words / WORCESTER SHIRE SAUCE / around the top (unstratified).

An elegant ribbed bottle from [34], again in natural green glass, probably also contained a condiment. A near complete example and part of another were found in [43], while a straight-sided fluted example was found in [36], and part of another in olive green

glass in [149]. The neck and shoulder of a bottle in colourless glass with a band of vertical ribbing just below the shoulder was found in [36], along with another rim/neck that has an external screw thread and decorative rings at intervals. Contexts [34] and [36] include bottles of flattened oval section.

?Milk bottle

A complete bottle with conical profile from [34] may have contained milk, although there is nothing to indicate the contents.

Small bottles

A distinctive form is a small bottle in clear glass with lentoidal section and cylindrical neck, probably for a concentrated sauce or essence, but perhaps for spirits or perfume. Two complete examples of slightly different sizes were found in [34], one in [36] and part of another is present in [43]. The largest group is from [149], which (from the bases) contained up to 20 examples.

Bottles/Jars

Numerous jars are represented, including a complete large straight-sided jar with angled shoulder and cylindrical neck found in [34]; faint lettering is apparent on the underside of the base. Part of another of the same type was found in this context, while others are present in the finds from [36] and [43].

Some of the larger bases from both jars and bottles have lettering and/or numbers in relief. Those from [36] include / C.S & C^O L^D / and the / TKB / monogram noted on some of the lids. The finds from [149] also include four examples of / C.S & C^O L^D /, two of / K / 3128 /, a large base from / CASTLEFORD / and three smaller bases with numbers.

Bottles with lettering in colourless glass include a cylindrical bottle from [34] is with the letters / CB / in relief inside a triangle and the number / 73 / on the underside of the base. Others from [36] (in colourless glass) have the numbers / 200 / and / 1227 / A / in triangles, while one has a star. One reads / 9288 / H P / while another reads / B & C^O /.

A large jar from [36] has an incised zig-zag band below the rim, while a small squat jar from [34] with ribbed wall in colourless glass probably contained a relish or fish paste.

Table wares

Context [149] contained a large part of a mould-blown jar (<53>) with slightly recessed upright rim and geometric 'cut' glass decoration; lettering in relief on the underside of the concave base reads / DEPOSÉ / H.P. /. This suggests that it was used to hold a sauce bottle on the dining table, although it could also have had a hinged lid.

Flask?

A complete vessel from [34] has a biconical body with low carination and a cylindrical neck; it is decorated with two bands of an oblique Greek key-type pattern; part of another was found in the same context, while another is present in [149].

Ink bottle

A complete ink bottle was found in [34], with lettering in relief on the underside of the base / FCC / 4 /.

?Phials

Three complete small bottles/phials (height c 78mm) and most of a fourth one of the same type were found in [149], along with a more typical phial of about the same size were found in [149].

Window glass

Window glass was found in [43] and is probably present in some of the other large groups.

The bottle and jar lids, corks and stoppers

Cork

A large number of corks were found, totalling 91 examples (659g); most of which are from [36] (84 examples, 614g); the others are from [34] (two examples) and [43]. The corks vary in shape and size, and measurements are hindered by the fact that several are somewhat distorted. All were measured to ascertain their diameter and thickness, and the data was recorded in an excel file.

The majority are flat discs used to seal jars; diameters range between 30mm and 95mm, with a small group of 30mm to 45mm (seven examples). Most are over 50mm across, with 10 examples at 52–55mm, and three more at 56–57mm. The main cluster is at 58–63mm (37 examples), with two at 65mm and one with a diameter of 95mm. Thickness usually ranges between c 16mm and 22mm. Most have more or less straight sides, but in a few cases that are more bevelled, and it was sometimes apparent from a constriction in the side that a cork had been reused to seal a jar slightly smaller than that which it was originally made for. An interesting feature, noted on three examples, is a central perforation that is larger on the upper side than on the underside; two are round, but one is rectangular in outline. Two other corks have semi-finished perforations.

A few corks from [36] and [43] are of cylindrical form; four from [36] are of wine bottle type (diameter c 20mm), but others are larger in diameter (32–50mm; thickness 20–48mm) and must have been used for other bottles or narrow-necked jars.

Ceramic(?) stoppers

Three mould-made stoppers with milled sides from [30] (<8>) are in a buff-coloured ware that includes abundant fine organic matter (possibly cork?). At the centre of the recessed upper surface is a crown motif flanked by the words / TRADE / and / MARK /; the lettering around the flat-topped border is largely worn away and has not yet been deciphered. The short cylindrical neck is hollow.

Two smaller examples from [36] (<16>, <52>) differ in that there is a long peg on the underside which fitted into a hole in a cork (remains still in situ). Example <16> is in an orange-coloured fabric; the lettering in relief, within a beaded border, is in the usual Cross and Blackwell format, but the central motif is now the royal coat of arms of England flanked by the lion and the unicorn. Stopper <52> is probably the same but the lettering is obscured by later deposits.

Composite lids

Two circular ceramic discs with bevelled sides from [34] (<37>) and 12 identical examples from [36] (<36>, <38>) have a central pin made of a dark silvery metal, the

disc-shaped head of which is stamped with the letters / Y & /. In every case a white powdery substance survives around the pin. These objects would have been part of a composite closure that probably involved an iron clip-on cover as supplied with stoneware jars made by Doulton and Watts, Lambeth (cf Green 1990, 362, 366). Other more complete examples are currently being processed.

Glass lids

Two complete lids were found in [34]. One reads /AIRE & CALDER BOTTLE CO / CASTLEFORD & LONDON /, while the other is plain but bisected by a deep groove. Another of the latter type was found in [55].

A large group of 23 lids was found in [36], with a range of sizes from 40mm to c 68mm in diameter. Twelve lids in four different sizes are quite plain. Two of the largest size are bisected by a groove, while two read / SYKES MACVAY & C^o / ALBION GLASSWORKS CASTLEFORD /. One small lid reads / JOHN KILNER / WAKEFIELD /, while two of different sizes read / CANNINGTON SHAW / ST HELENS /. Three lids in two different sizes have a monogram at the centre made up of the letters KTB, and the smaller ones also have the number / 7 /. Another lid has the same initials in a different arrangement.

Two complete lids were also found in [43]; one has the same lettering as the above, while the other reads / SYKES MACVAY & C^o / ALBION GLASSWORKS CASTLEFORD /.

Three of the five examples from [149] are plain, while one reads / WRIGHT & C^o / BRIERLEY HULL /; the fifth has a monogram of the letters / KCB /.

Glass stoppers

Seven glass stoppers were found in [34], all with flat disc heads and a conical peg that would originally have had a cork collar at the top (a complete example was found in [43]). Four examples have metal caps which read / CROSS & BLACKWELL / PURVEYORS TO HER MAJESTY / around the edge, with / 21 SOHO SQ / LONDON / at the centre, within a milled border.

The same type of stopper, with a metal cap and lettering in relief and picked out in red was found in [36] (<15>); the lettering around the edge reads / D. COUTTS & C^o / LONDON /. Within this is / OLD YET FIRM / and / TRADE / REGISTERED / MARK /; the motif at the centre is unclear but may have been an oak tree. Nothing has yet been found out about this firm.

Numerous other glass stoppers were found in [43], [78], [131] and [149]; others are still being washed and dried.

Lead

Two crumpled items of lead-tin alloy from [43], both distorted, are seals that would have covered the corks in a bottle. The smaller <12> has a diameter of c 23mm; it is unclear whether it had any markings or not. The larger <11> has a diameter of c 43mm and bears a large circular motif in relief. At the centre is a crown, around which are the words .../ PURVEYORS TO HER MAJESTY / and around this are traces of / CROSS & BLACKWELL /; below the crown is possibly part of an address (hidden where the edge is bent), and below this / LONDON /. This probably read / 21 SOHO S^o / (see above, glass stoppers). A third example, also bent, is <13> from [149] has part of a lentoidal border in relief, at the centre of which is a circular motif. Above this is the word /

PATENT /, with across / BETTS C^o / to the left and / LTD / to the right. The lettering below this is very faint and has not yet been deciphered.

Rubber

Stopper <17> from [43] is made of vulcanite, a specially treated rubber. It has a screw thread and chisel top of rectangular form with recessed panels on each side, one containing the word / RILEY'S /, the other / PATENT /. Nothing has yet been found out about the inventor.

Leather

A small amount of leather was recovered from a sieved sample of context [[46].

Bone

A complete button was found in [43] (<7>; this is a flat-backed circular disc with a centring hole for the cutting tool and four holes in the central recess. The closest parallel in the typology devised by South and published by Noël Hume (1969, 90–3) is type 19, which is most common between 1837 and 1865.

The slag

Four large pieces of slag (total weight 4.002kg) were recovered from [59]. These have a mixed texture, being partly slag and partly clinker; pieces of coal are also embedded in the surface. All pieces have relatively flat surfaces and one has a rounded edge suggesting that all could be from the base of a hearth, but this not the kind of hearth bottom associated with smithing, and so it has been recorded as undiagnostic furnace slag. A small piece of vitrified hearth lining was found in a sieved sample from [129].

Bibliography

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