

## **Clay tobacco pipes**

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[Nb. 3x Pipe illustrations by David Higgins]

### **Introduction and methodology**

A total of 175 pieces of clay pipe weighing 1175g were recovered from 8 contexts (including finds from a test pit counted as unstratified). These have been catalogued and recorded on an Excel spreadsheet. The catalogue records, per context, the spot-date, the quantity of stem, bowl and mouth fragments, the overall fragment count, weight, and comments on condition and any makers' marks or decoration present. The minimum number of bowls per context was also recorded. Full catalogue details remain in archive. Most of the pipe bowls can be paralleled with the local Oxford typology based on pipes from St Ebbe's church (Oswald 1984), although this has been updated where necessary. Other bowls are identified in the catalogue by codes based on Atkinson and Oswald's (1969) London pipes typology with bowl types assigned to an abbreviated code (eg. AO22).

### **Summary of the assemblage**

The pipes are mostly in good condition, generally fresh and unstained, with a high proportion of complete bowls present and many quite long pieces of stem - in two instances up to 120mm long. Only a moderate degree of residuality was noted in a few contexts. In total there are 33 pieces of pipe bowl (from the same number of pipes), 6 mouthpieces and 136 stem fragments. Only one pipe bears a maker's mark, and only one piece (a stem) shows any decoration. Evidence for smoking on most of the bowls demonstrates they represent occupation debris. The assemblage has a strong late 17th-century dating emphasis with slighter evidence of activity into the early 18th century. A summary of context details and spot-dates is provided in Table 1 while a breakdown of bowl types is provided in Table 2.

<b>Cxt</b>	<b>No. pieces</b>	<b>Spot-date</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Ctx Description</b>
269	4	17thC	Four 17thC stems.	Occupation Layer
270	91	c 1670-1690	Large group including 19 bowls (many complete) and 5 mouthpieces. Bowls generally range from c 1660-90 with a deposition date during the 1670s most likely. The group includes one notable stem decorated with red ochre lines ( <b>Fig 1</b> ). Most of the bowls are typical local spur types with a barrel shaped form (Oxford Type B), but there is one example with more pronounced curves in a local style (Developed Ox Type B, <b>Fig 2</b> ). A damaged bowl of c 1680-1710 may be intrusive?	Occupation Layer
275	1	17thC	One stem.	Demolition?
287	4	c 1690-1750	Three stems and a bowl of c 1690-1750.	Test Pit
290	48	c 1660-1690	Eleven bowls (mostly complete). These range from c 1640-90 in date, with the majority being c 1660-80. The stems are 17thC and probably contemporary.	Garden Soil
291	10	Early 18thC?	All stems. Mostly 17thC, but 2 probably early 18thC in date.	Demolition?

294	5	c 1670-1690	Four 17thC style stems and a bowl of c 1670-90.	Occupation Layer (= 270)
U/S	12	c 1660-1690	Eleven stems and a bowl of c 1660-90, from a test pit, with a Thomas Hunt stamp on the heel ( <b>Fig 3</b> ).	Test Pit
<b>Total</b>	<b>175</b>			

*Table 1. Clay pipes. Summary of context information and quantities*

<b>Bowl Type</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>No. Bowls</b>
Oxford: A (overlaps with London AO13)	1630-1655/60 <b>1660-1680</b>	6
West Country style (Thomas Hunt I, maker)	<b>1660-1690</b>	1
Oxford: B	1650-1690 (here mostly <b>1670-1690</b> )	23
Oxford: B (developed)	<b>1670-1730</b>	1
London: AO20	<b>1680-1710</b>	1
Oxford: C/D hybrid (similar London AO25)	1690-1790 ( <b>here 1690-1750</b> )	1
<b>Total Bowls</b>		<b>33</b>

*Table 2. Number of pipe bowls by type and date (dates in bold are the most likely range for the pipes here)*

The largest and most significant group is from Context (270), which produced 91 fragments of pipes, including 19 bowls. One of these is a burnished body fragment, most likely from a spur bowl, but the other types can be divided into two groups; those with heels and those with spurs.

There are four heel pipes represented, two of which have complete bowls of c 1660-80 (AO13, Atkinson and Oswald's London type 13). These two also match forms of c 1660-70 from a pit group at Queen's College (Provost's Garden), Oxford (OXQUPG16 1085; Higgins 2017). These bowls are not burnished and they are made of a fine fabric without any obvious inclusions. There is a damaged heel of the same type. The fourth heeled example (also damaged) is of a later form, similar to a London type 20 of c 1680-1710, but certainly of local manufacture since it is made of a fine sandy fabric, probably from the Shotover Hill area. It is also the only heel bowl with a burnished surface in this group. While it could be an intrusive piece and date from as late as c 1710-20, it could equally be an early example of a new form dating from around 1680.

In contrast to the heel bowls, the 14 spur bowls are all burnished, marking them out as a better quality style of pipe. There is one spur fragment that could be a little earlier (perhaps residual) but the others are nearly all Oxford Type B (c 1650-1690: local versions of the London AO15 bowl, which dates from c 1660-80). Some of the forms are quite large, perhaps suggesting that they are as late as c 1690, and they typically have thick, chunky stems with barrel-shaped bowl profiles. They are of later types to the spur bowls found in the Queen's College pit group of c 1660-70 and so most likely to fall into a c 1670-90 bracket, with deposition during the 1670s being most likely. Most of the bowls have fine fabrics without obvious inclusions, but some have fine sandy inclusions visible with a 10x lens, showing that they are made of a local clay (probably from the Shotover Hill area). One bowl (Fig 2) has a rather different form with much more pronounced curves to the bowl. This piece represents the

introduction of new stylistic characteristics, which went on to become typical of the spur forms produced in the Oxford area during the next few decades ('Developed' Oxford Type B, c 1670-1730, see also Higgins 2007, Fig. 21.34-5).

The bowl forms from (270) all cluster around the c 1660-90 period, with almost all falling within a c 1670-90 bracket. A deposition date during the 1670s seems most likely for this group, and all the stems appear to be of contemporary types. This dating and consistency is important since one of the stems belongs to a very rare category that has been decorated with coloured lines on its surface. This piece (Fig 1) can therefore be dated by association to c 1670-90 and has lines of reddish brown ochre running along it. These 'rust coloured' lines often fade out rather at the edges and there is a general background 'tone' of colour in other areas. The colouring seems rather ephemeral and could well have been subject to smearing or loss due to handling during use, burial or subsequent washing. Applied colouring like this is extremely rare and only a handful of other examples have ever been noted – also from Oxford. It appears, therefore, that this was a decorative method peculiar to Oxford, but one that was used regularly enough for a few examples to have survived.

The only other piece of note is an unstratified bowl from a test pit (Fig 3). This dates from c 1660-90 and is the only marked pipe in this assemblage. The heel has the incuse stamp THO/MAS/HVNT for one of the Thomas Hunts from Marlborough in Wiltshire, some 35 miles to the south-west of Oxford. Thomas senior was born into a famous pipemaking family at Norton-St-Philip, Somerset, in 1639. He was working in Marlborough by the 1660s and left the pipemaking business there to his son, also Thomas, when he died in 1692 (Lewcun 1985, 18-20). His son continued the business into the early eighteenth century but this bowl form and style of mark dates from c 1660-90, when his father would have been running the business. Thomas Hunt pipes are very common in the Marlborough area, showing that they ran a prolific workshop, and examples were traded a considerable distance, as witnessed by this piece. Examples of this type of Thomas Hunt mark have been recorded previously from excavations in both Abingdon and Oxford, showing that they were regularly traded into this region.

## Illustrations

Fig 1. A stem fragment decorated with reddish-brown coloured stripes that look like some type of 'rust coloured' ochre. The stem comes from a context group containing bowls clustering in the c 1670-90 bracket and with deposition in the 1670s being most likely. The stem itself is not burnished, nor does it contain any obvious sandy inclusions. The stem bore measures  $8/64''$  (c 3.5mm). A couple of other stems decorated with similar reddish stripes are known from Oxford, suggesting that it was a particular decorative technique that was occasionally used in the city during the seventeenth century. Context (270).

Fig 2. A spur bowl from a context group containing bowls clustering in the c 1670-90 bracket and with deposition in the 1670s being most likely. The other bowls are all barrel-shaped and this stands out as a new style that was probably starting to be introduced at the time ('Developed' Oxford Type B, c 1670-1730). The fabric has fine sandy particles visible with a 10x lens showing that it was obtained locally, probably from the Shotover Hill area. The rim is bottered and half-milled. There is a poor burnish on the bowl and stem, but only on the upper surfaces so that the underside of the stem and front right hand side of the bowl have been missed. This is an unusually poor finish. Stem bore  $8/64''$  (c 3.5mm). Context (270).

Fig 3. A West Country style bowl dating from c 1660-90 with a bottered rim and a fine burnish. There is no rim milling. The heel has an incuse stamp for the first Thomas Hunt of Marlborough, who was a prolific maker during this period and exported widely, with examples of his pipes having been found on previous excavations in Abingdon and Oxford, which is about 35 miles NE of Marlborough. Good quality imports from the Wiltshire/Hampshire region formed a small but regular part of the pipe supply to the Oxford area throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Stem bore  $7/64''$  (c 3mm). Unstratified find from a test pit (Cast 745.6; Die 1121).

## **Bibliography**

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