

EXCAVATIONS AT THE COLEORTON POTTERY, NOTTINGHAM ROAD, LOUNT

Tim Higgins

with contributions from:

David Barker, Leon Hunt, Andrew Hyam and Gerwyn Richards

In 2012 an archaeological excavation was carried out by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on the land at the former Lisk Controls site, Nottingham Road, Leicestershire (SK 3860 1920), formerly the site of the nineteenth-century Coleorton Pottery factory. The archaeological work was undertaken on behalf of Bellway Homes (East Midlands) Ltd in advance of the residential development of the site. This paper presents the results of the excavations in relation to the history of Coleorton Pottery.

INTRODUCTION

Archaeological works, carried out in advance of the residential development at Nottingham Road, Lount, Leicestershire, identified the remains of the former Coleorton Pottery works. The site lies within the parish of Coleorton, on the south side of the Nottingham Road and opposite the village of Lount, *c.*2.5 miles north-east of Ashby-de-la-Zouch in the district of North West Leicestershire, at NGR SK 3860 1920 (Fig. 1). The site covers approximately 2ha and lies at a height *c.*108m aOD on land that is largely flat.

The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of England and Wales Sheet 141 (Loughborough) indicates that the underlying geology is Pennine Lower Coal Measures Formation, containing mudstone, sandstone and siltstone.

The residential development required the demolition of the existing buildings of the former Coleorton Pottery, and therefore a historic building survey was carried out (Richards 2011; Richards and Hyam 2012). The survey indicated that only limited structural remains of the Pottery building survived, which were used as offices. The survey recorded elements of this building, including the re-used oak king trusses, iron columns and raised marks on the timber trusses.

Following the survey, an archaeological field evaluation by trial trenching was carried out in 2011 (Higgins 2011). Seven trenches were excavated, one of which contained nineteenth-century brick foundations of a circular kiln and a further rectangular kiln structure. Further evaluation in 2012 revealed more kilns; subsequently, a scheme of targeted archaeological investigation and recording was instigated.



Fig. 1. Location of site at Lount (outlined). OS Street View OS Open Data (© Crown Copyright and Database Rights 2015 Ordnance Survey).

THE HISTORY OF COLEORTON POTTERY (with Leon Hunt, Andrew Hyam and Gerwyn Richards)

The Pottery was part of the Beaumont Estate and was first leased for the manufacture of pottery in 1835 (Stewart 2013, 4). It was located in this particular area given the availability of the raw materials required for the production of pottery wares. The Coleorton Pottery had access to its own clay and coal pit or quarry, which was situated approximately half a mile south, on the east side of the main Nottingham to Ashby Road.

The earliest available map of the area is the 1841 tithe map of Coleorton and tithe award, which records that the land belongs to Sir Henry Beaumont (Stewart 2013, 31). The map indicates that the area of the Pottery had two enclosures with a number of small rectangular buildings located towards the northern end of the site, close to the road. These are assumed to be the Pottery works.

The Coleorton Pottery was operated by Wilson and Proudman, manufacturers of yellow ware and other domestic wares. The census from 1841 lists Thomas Wilson, John Wilson and George Proudman as pot makers at Lount (Richards and Hyam 2012, 3). During that same year the company changed ownership, following a dispute with George Proudman, who continued to be employed at the Pottery but was no longer a partner. In the same year, an Elizabeth Wilson took ownership of the company following the death of her husband, who was either Thomas or John Wilson. The company was subsequently known as Wilson and Co. By 1851 the ownership of the company was passed on to Thomas Wilson, following the death of his mother, Elizabeth Wilson, and continued under the same title. The census returns suggest that the Pottery was at its peak, with the largest workforce, between 1851 and 1881. The census also lists brick makers and pipe makers, as well as pot makers, indicating perhaps diversity and overlapping trades and products within the pottery.

After the death of Thomas in 1877, his brothers William and John Wilson carried on as 'Wilson Brothers'. In the 1881 census a William Wilson is listed as an earthenware master who employed 17 men, 11 young women and three boys at the Potworks, Coleorton (Richards and Hyam 2012, 3). The size of the workforce suggests a large scale production, which is possibly reflected in the first edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map of 1882. While the boundaries remained the same as those seen in the 1841 tithe map, a series of new buildings are shown occupying the front of the site, with a further L-shaped building close to the centre. There were also now three circular structures, indicating pottery kilns, with associated buildings attached.

By 1891 the Pottery works had been leased to a company known as 'Stewart Brothers', who produced yellow ware and Rockingham ware on the site until 1898. The lease of the Pottery works was then taken on by a company known as Grinhaff Brent & Co., and continued until 1904 (Stewart 2013, 46). The products manufactured during this period were Leicestershire Fireproof red ware, buff lustre and mottled ware, plus an 'Ashby Grained ware'. For a short time, following a fire at Granville Pottery in Hanley, it was thought that Minerva Art ware by Carlo Manzoni had also been produced on the site by this company.

The 1903 second edition OS map is very similar to the 1882 edition, but shows that the Pottery had expanded, and had two additional kilns and a larger rectangular building to the south of the original group. A company called Mason Cash & Co. from Church Gresley leased the Pottery site in 1904 (Stewart 2013, 49). However, this was only to obtain the clay. Therefore, the manufacture of pottery ceased during this period, and consequently the pottery buildings fell into disuse and disrepair.

A William Oram Trivett took over the lease in 1911 and he was the first to name the site Lount Pottery. Following the necessary repairs to the buildings, Trivett renewed the manufacturing of yellow ware, fire proof ware, general domestic ware

and art pottery, and he called his firm the Trivett Pottery Co. Ltd (Stewart 2013, 49). Trivett surrendered the lease in 1919 when it was taken over by the Clay Ring Co., a firm who were based in Ravensbury, Earlsfield, London. This company introduced the manufacture of earthenware components for gas mantles and other lighting equipment on site (Stewart 2013, 57). The 1923 edition of the OS map shows that further development had taken place on the Pottery, which included the addition of a third kiln to the south and a building aligned east–west immediately to the south of the original group.

In 1915 and 1929 the Pottery was visited by representatives of the *Pottery Gazette*, and they reported that the Pottery had been engaged in the production of utilitarian wares, cane ware and artistic ornamental pieces. The 1929 report also stated that during the First World War the company also manufactured acid proof chemical ware for war purposes, such as acid valves, used in the manufacture of munitions (Stewart 2013, 57). There are a small number of substantial ceramic items from the excavation which have not yet been identified, and these could be examples of acid valves that were produced on site. The report also states that electricity had been introduced in relation to the manufacturing methods. Electricity was being used in the clay forming processes, and now powered the jollies and lathes (*ibid*).

Coleorton Pottery Co. Ltd assumed the lease in 1928 after the Clay Ring Co. Ltd surrendered it. The company produced the usual class of goods, but the managing director, a Mr J. R. Kemp, was an electrical engineer, and the firm branched out into electrical lighting equipment including, for example, the manufacture of table lamps. William Oram Trivett returned as art director in an attempt by the firm to spread its manufacture base as wide as possible. However, in 1935, the firm went into liquidation and surrendered the lease. In 1936 a new company, Coleorton Pottery Ltd, took over the site to manufacture garden pottery and ornamental ware for sale by the Beaumont Estate. This was the last time that any type of ceramic goods was made on the site and the production ceased in 1938 (Stewart 2013, 63).

The Pottery buildings became a food store for the firm Bakker Brits Ltd, who held it until 1948. Afterwards, Lisk Industrial Controls, manufacturers of engineering and electrical components, occupied the site until 2007. By 1960 the OS map shows that the central building has expanded, but the older buildings on the northern part of the site have started to disappear. The 1984 edition of the OS map shows the site with the older buildings having been demolished and a single large factory building covering most of the site.

RESULTS

The evaluation and excavations of Coleorton Pottery have provided significant archaeological evidence which complements the documentary information (Fig. 2). The two evaluations and subsequent excavation undertaken by ULAS have revealed evidence of seven kiln structures and floors of three workshops, dating to the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century. In addition to these, evidence for the early to mid-nineteenth-century pottery manufacture period was located beneath two of the kilns.

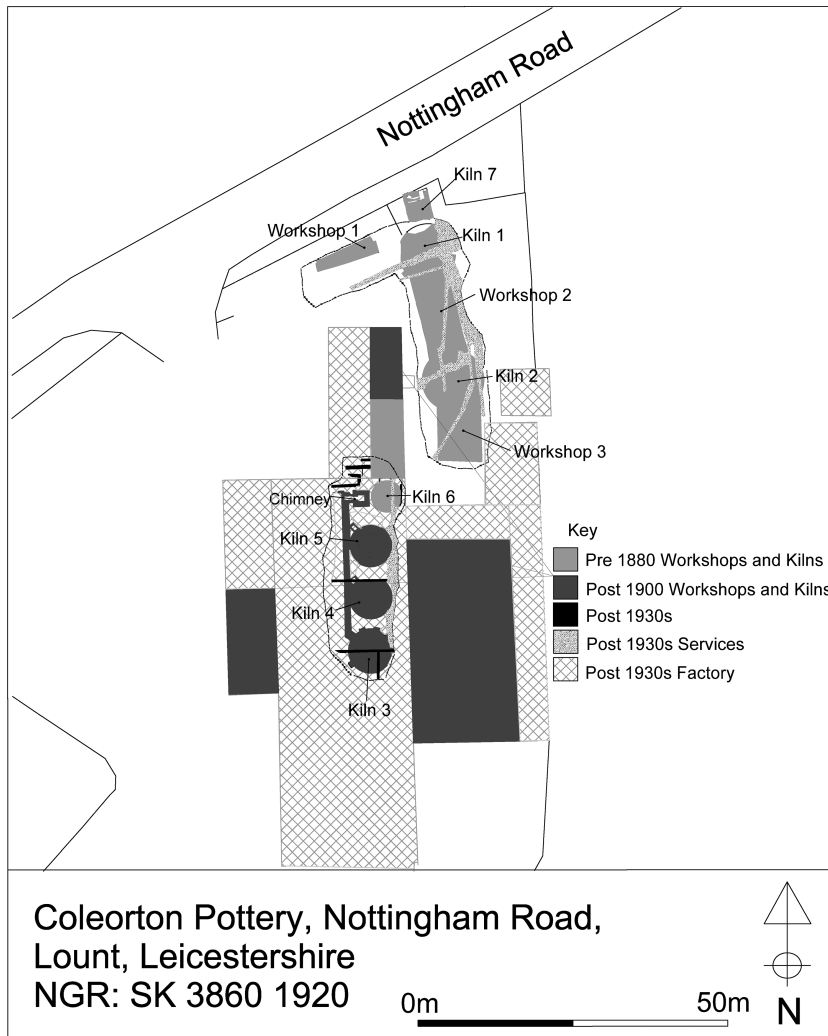


Fig. 2. Location plan of the Pottery kilns found during the excavations, combined with elements of Pottery buildings identified during the building survey.

The development of Coleorton Pottery can be shown in four phases: the early to mid-nineteenth century; the mid to late nineteenth century; the late nineteenth to early twentieth century; and the early twentieth century.

Phase 1. Early to mid-nineteenth-century pottery manufacture

The archaeological evidence suggests that ceramic manufacture had started on the site in the early to mid-nineteenth century. The brick foundations found directly under Kilns 1 and 2 may be remnants of early kilns, possibly associated with the period when Wilson & Proudman began to manufacture pottery on the site.

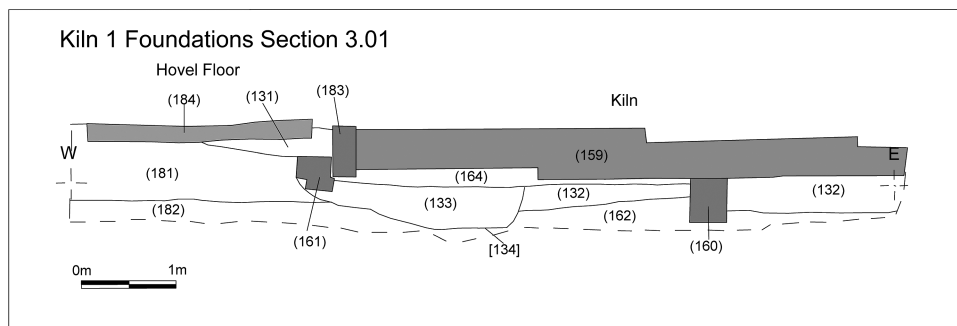


Fig. 3. West-east section through Kiln 1.

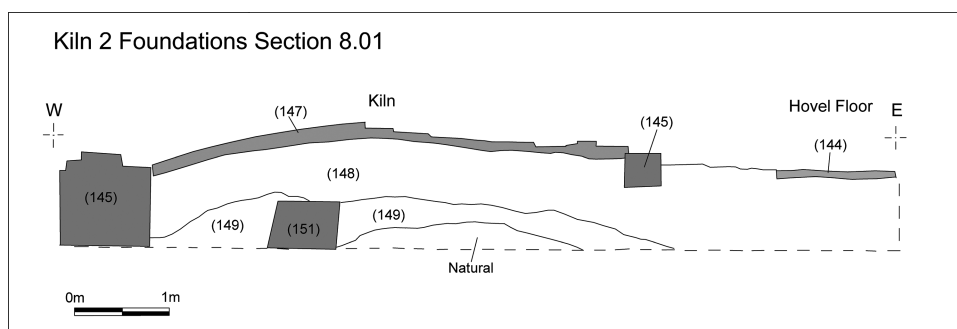


Fig. 4. West-east section through Kiln 2.

The unstratified material contained a sherd of white-salt glazed stoneware which dates to the mid-eighteenth century. A creamware plate edge from a layer located below Kiln 1 was dated to between *c.*1790 and, at the latest, the 1820s (Barker 2014). Both salt-glazed stone ware and creamware sherds are thought to have been brought in, rather than manufactured at the Pottery. No evidence of the previous coal mine works believed to have been present on the site prior to the Pottery were found during the archaeological excavations.

A west-east section was excavated across Kiln 1 (Fig. 3), revealing two layers of clay made ground, (162) and (182), at the base of the section overlying the natural substratum. Sealing the clay was a probable foundation or bedding layer (132) which was cut by a pit [134]. The ceramic finds associated with this pit suggest a date from the second quarter of the nineteenth century (Barker 2014). Both the pit feature and the foundation layers were cut by two brick foundations (160) and (161), which were thought to be an earlier phase of kiln. The ceramics found under Kiln 1 also dated to the second quarter of the nineteenth century and comprised refined yellow wares. These vessel forms consisted of baking dishes, pans, jugs, basins and chamber pots, and a high proportion were decorated. Yellow ware manufacture started in the 1820s–30s and 57 per cent of all the sherds recovered during these excavations were of this vessel type (Barker 2014). Kiln furniture found within this phase included hand-formed stilts with brown-glazed contact scars, suggesting they supported Rockingham ware vessels.

A section excavated across Kiln 2 (Fig. 4) revealed a convex layer of made ground (149) overlying the natural substratum. This layer appeared to be cut by the remnants of brick foundations (151), and can be interpreted as an earlier kiln foundation. The layer below the kiln floor (148) produced pottery that was no later than the mid-nineteenth century. The ceramic vessels found under Kiln 2 included more yellow ware along with other ceramic vessels, including fine and coarse redware, and earthenware brown salt-glazed stoneware bottles (Barker 2014).

Phase 2. Mid to late nineteenth-century construction of the up-draft kilns

As described above, documentary evidence indicates that a series of buildings were constructed on the front of the site, as shown in the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1882 (Hunt 2011). Following excavation, it appears that these were associated with Kiln 7 and Workshop 1. To the east, another group of buildings including two circular pottery kilns and, between them, an adjoining rectangular structure, are believed to be Kilns 1 and 2 with associated building Workshop 2 (Fig. 5).

KILN 1

Kiln 1 was located in the north-western corner of the site, the same location as one of the circular structures featured on the 1882 OS map (Figs 3, 5 and 6). The Kiln 1 structure is one of two circular features which can be discerned on the map, and are connected by a rectangular building aligned north to south (Workshop 2; Fig. 5).

Parts of the structure were missing due to truncation by modern services, although enough of the structure remained to extrapolate the diameter and other details of the kiln (Fig. 6). The whole structure measured 9.3m in diameter, and survived to a height of between two and four brick courses. The kiln structure comprised an outer hovel wall (186), a circular hovel floor or walk way (185), a kiln floor (159) and ash pits. An entrance way into the hovel was located at the southern end of the structure leading into Workshop 2. Under a repair to the hovel floor (184), finds of Thomas Arrowsmith kiln furniture provide a *terminus post quem* of post-1884 (Barker 2014). The repair to the hovel floor may indicate that it once formed another entrance into the hovel.

KILN 2

Kiln 2 was located in the north-west corner of the site and matches the location of a second circular structure located towards the front of the site, depicted on the 1882 OS map (Figs 4, 5 and 7). This kiln structure was located directly to the south of Kiln 1, and both were connected by an adjoining rectangular structure Workshop 2 (Fig. 5).

Unfortunately, parts of the structure were again missing due to some truncation by modern services, but substantial parts remained, enabling some details of the kiln to be interpreted. The hovel and kiln structure measured 9.70m in diameter, and survived to a height of between two and four brick courses. The structure comprised a hovel wall (146), hovel floor or walkways (144), kiln floor (147) and kiln walls (Fig. 7). Two entrance ways to the hovel were revealed, with the northernmost forming a passageway into the rectangular structure (Workshop 2) (Figs 5 and 7). Only seven ash pits survived, but their locations suggest there may have been ten originally. The

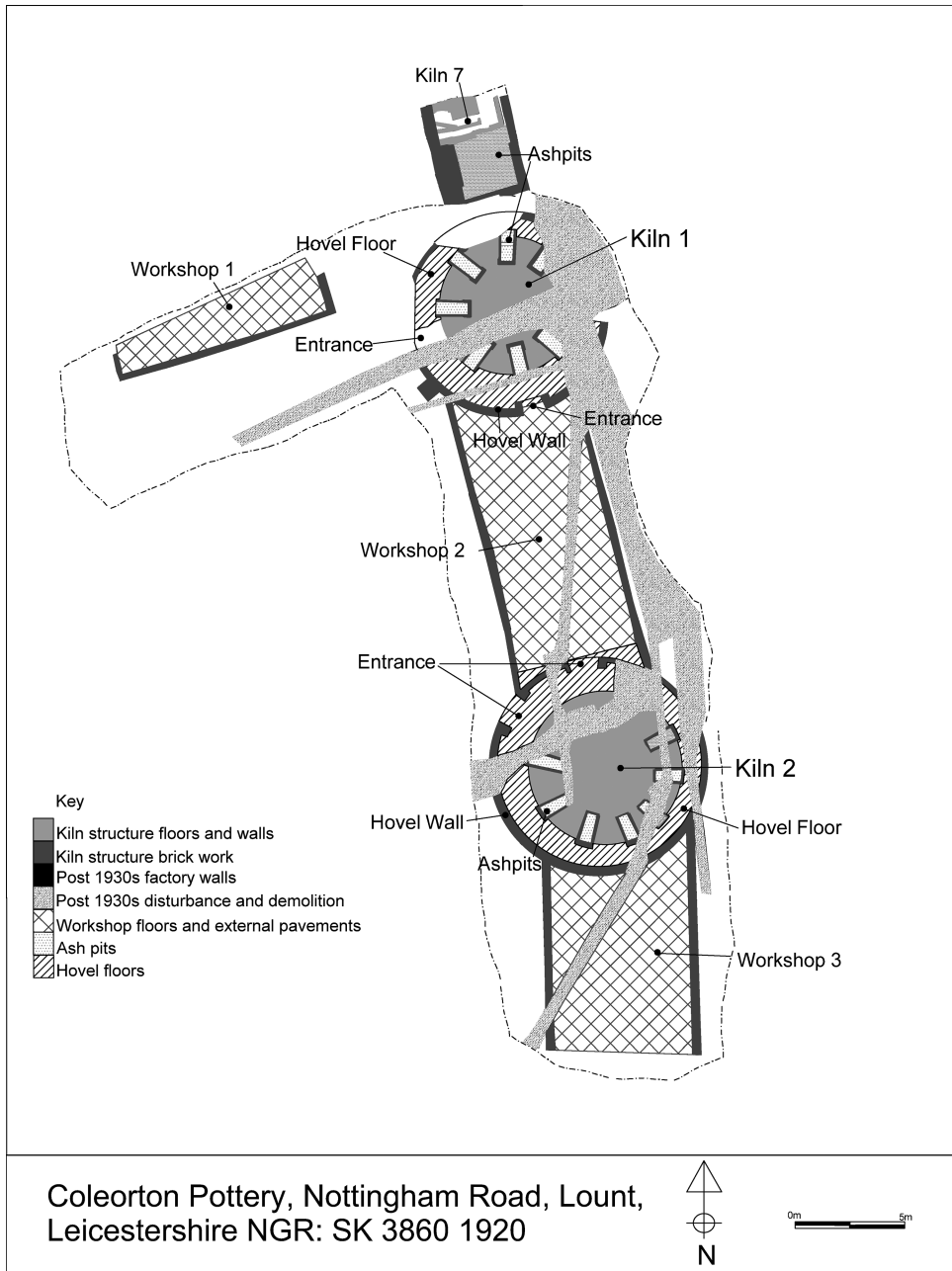


Fig. 5. Plan of Kilns 1-2 and Workshops 1-3.

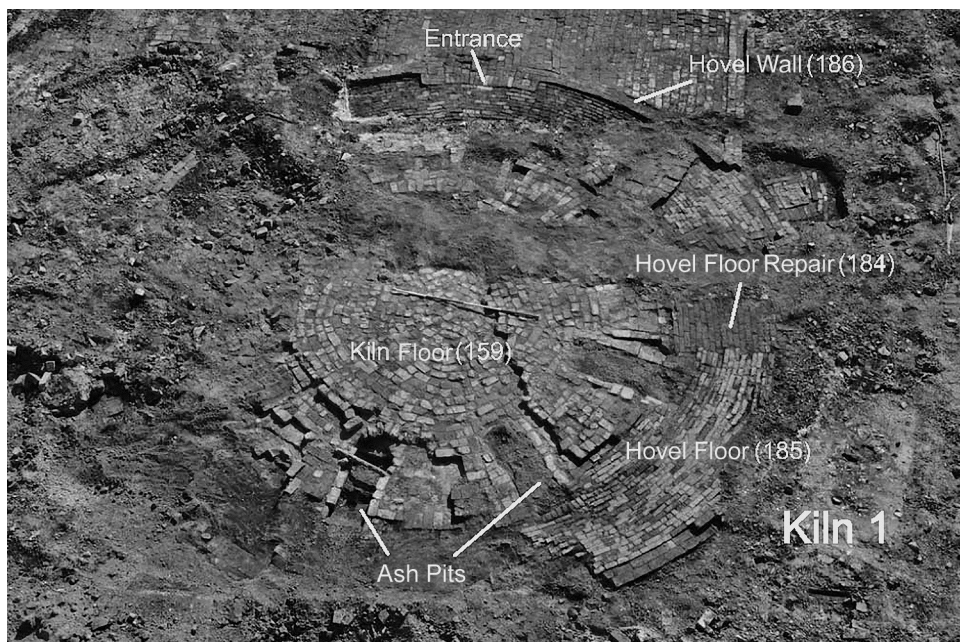


Fig. 6. Kiln 1 viewed from the south.

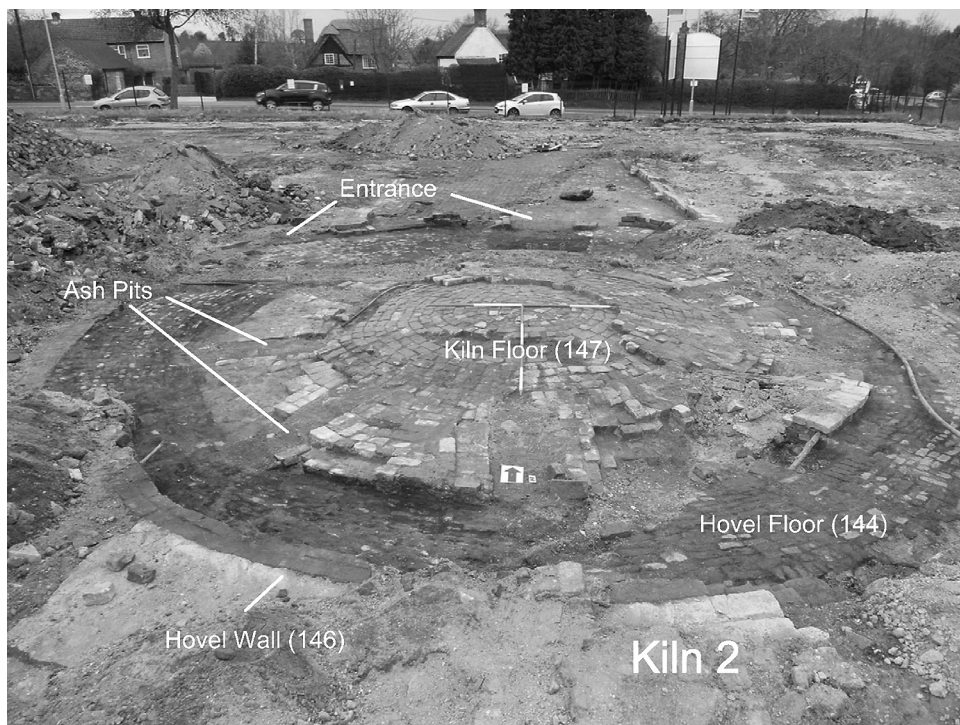


Fig. 7. Kiln 2 viewed from the south.

finds from the ash pit fills included both moulded yellow ware mixing bowls with internal slip coats and machine-made stilts, which indicates that the ash pit went out of use after 1884 and most likely during the twentieth century (Barker 2014).

Kilns 1 and 2 were both up-draft kilns, which were generally circular structures with several fire boxes located around the base. The flames and heat would travel upwards through fire boxes into the central kiln chamber, and be drawn upwards and through the holes in the crown of the kiln chamber (Rhodes 1968).

The coal or wood would be held on the iron bars within the fire boxes, and air for combustion entered from below. Ashes drop through the 'grate' and are collected below in the ash pit, where they can be raked out from time to time. This arrangement is similar to the disposition of elements in any coal-burning furnace or stove, as it brings the air to all surfaces of the fuel (Rhodes 1968).

The two up-draft kilns on this site were both hovel kilns. These kilns comprised a bottle-shape chimney or 'hovel' constructed outside and over the main part of the kiln or oven, and not resting on it. It is likely that the pottery would receive their biscuit and glost (lead glaze) firings respectively in the factory's two large up-draft kilns.

Located to the north-west of the circular Kiln 1, excavations had revealed the foundations and floor surface of a rectangular building (Workshop 1), which corresponds with part of a series of buildings depicted on the Ordnance Survey Map of 1882 and occupied the Nottingham Road frontage area (Fig. 5).

KILN 7

Directly to the east of Workshop 1, a foundation for a possible rectangular kiln or oven was located (Kiln 7; Figs 5 and 8). The rectangular Kiln 7 may be a hot-house or green-house. This was a heated room containing green ware, where unfired clay was dried to a clay hard state and put in storage prior to firing.



Fig. 8. Kiln 7 during excavation, viewed from the north-west.

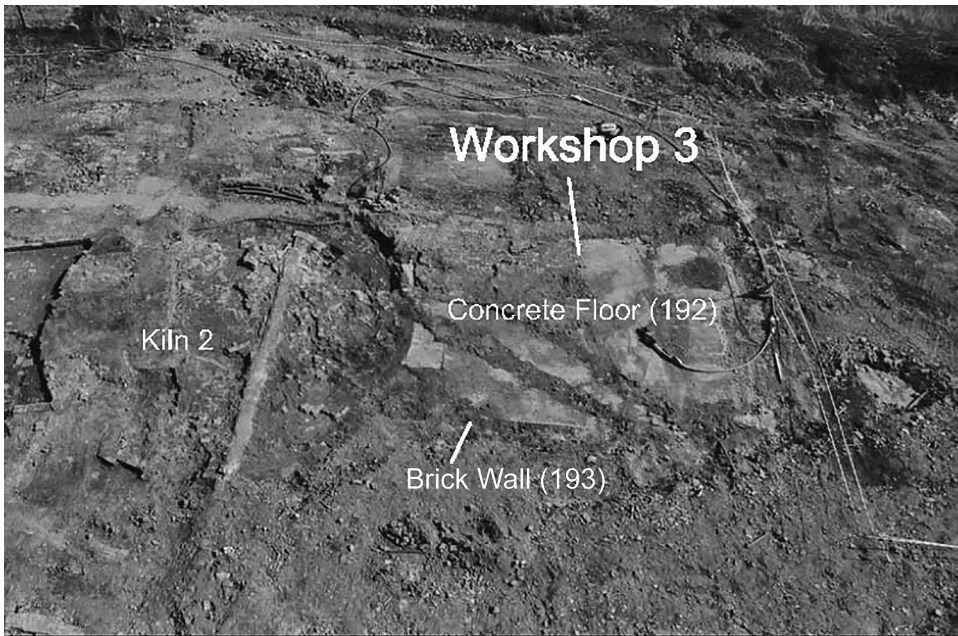


Fig. 9. Workshop 3 viewed from the west.



Fig. 10. Kiln 6 viewed from the west.

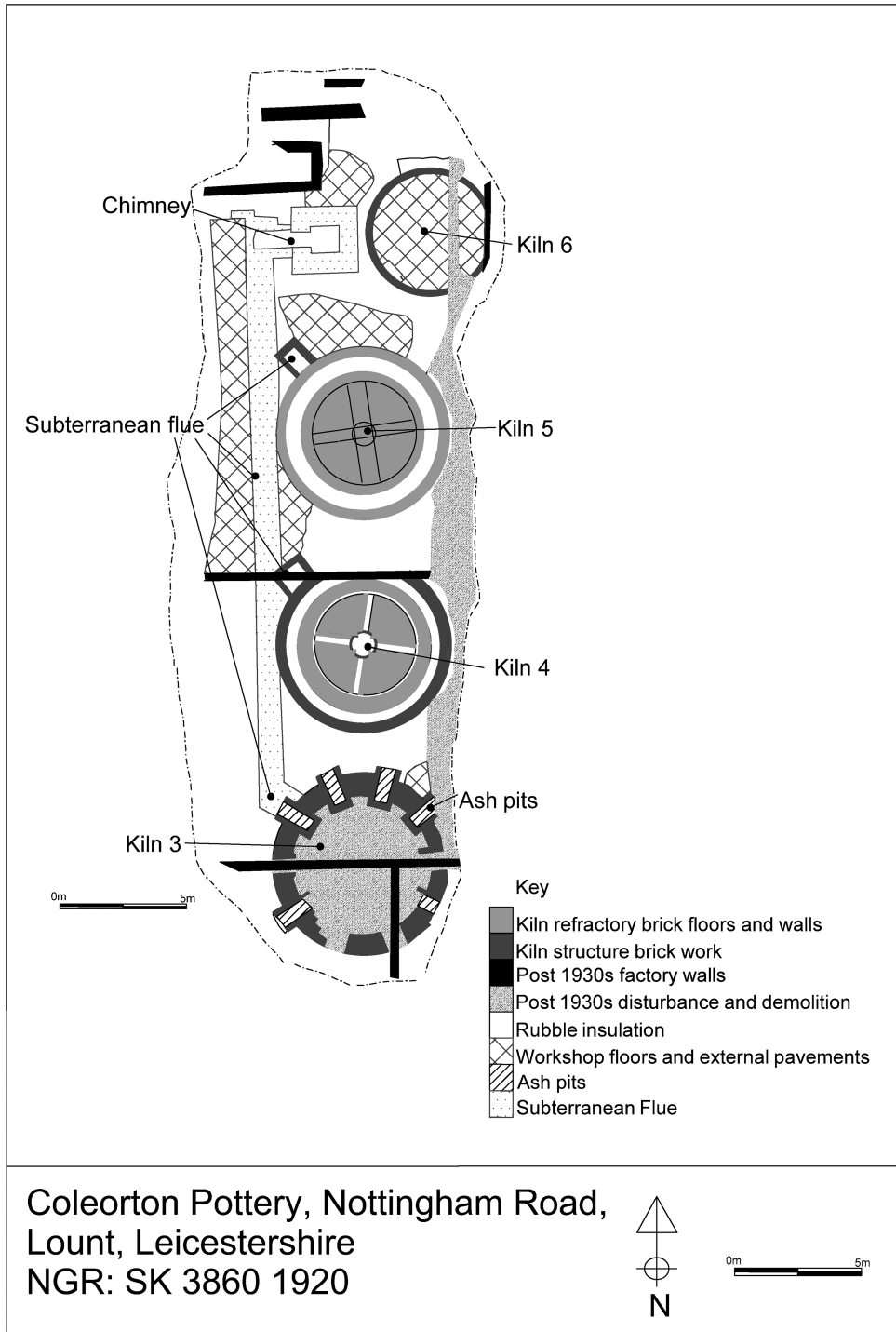


Fig. 11. Plan of Kilns 3-6.

Excavations revealed a second workshop structure (Workshop 2; Fig. 5) which was the linear building located between Kilns 1 and 2, a connecting structure which appears on the 1882 Ordnance Survey map. The excavations undertaken within the structure provided evidence which suggests that this building post-dates the kilns in construction. The workshop measured 13.40m long, 6.15m wide and survived to height of at least five brick courses.

Located immediately to the south of the circular Kiln structure 2 was another adjoining rectangular brick structure (192), thought to be a floor and foundation for a workshop (Workshop 3) (Figs 5 and 9). The workshop had a concrete rather than a brick floor (192), which would suggest that the building is likely to be of either late nineteenth or early twentieth century date. Workshop 3 does not appear on any of the Ordnance Survey maps. This indicates that it may have been perhaps a temporary structure erected between the compilation of the 1882 and 1903 OS maps, and later replaced by a much larger building, Building 4 (Higgins 2011, 40), which was erected in the twentieth century. The function of these three workshops is unknown, but it is likely they were used for various activities associated with pottery manufacture.

KILN 6

Excavations revealed a circular brick structure (112) at the southern end of the L-shaped building, towards the centre of the site (Kiln 6) (Figs 10 and 11). Kiln structure 6 was thought to be the same as the small circular structure depicted on the 1882 OS map and measured 5m in diameter. However, there was no evidence for firing or other features associated with kilns within, or below, the structure. The structure may have been modified at some unspecified date and a new floor surface (113) may have been inserted later, and thus removed any kiln or oven features. It may have been used as a hot-house, clay storage or preparation room. Although no datable evidence was found during the excavation, Kiln 6 dates from at least 1882 based on the cartographic evidence.

Based on the cartographic evidence and finds found under the up-draft kilns, the four kilns and three workshops are thought to date from the late nineteenth century. The Hovel floor in Kiln 1 had been repaired, and the Thomas Arrowsmith kiln furniture found associated with that repair suggested a post-1884 date.

By the 1840s the name of the company had changed and was trading under 'Wilson & Co.', and by the 1870s the name would change again to 'Wilson Brothers'. It is thought that the four kilns and associated workshops were all constructed during this period of ownership.

Phase 3. Late nineteenth to early twentieth-century pottery expansion and construction of the down-draft kilns

By the late 1800s to early 1900s a radical redevelopment and expansion of the original group of pottery buildings had occurred. The development took place mainly towards the southern half of the site. The second edition 1903 OS map now depicts two additional kilns and a larger roughly rectangular building to the south-east, with another smaller rectangular building located to the south-west.

The L-shaped building, which was part of the original group, is altered and has an extension running northwards. The building survey undertaken prior to demolition revealed that parts of the factory date to the late nineteenth century (Richards and Hyam 2012, 7).

KILN 3

Excavations revealed Kiln 3, which is in the location of the southerly of two new circular features that are depicted on the 1903 OS map, to the south-west corner of the Pottery site and aligned north–south (Figs 12–14). The kiln measured 7m in diameter and contained ten ash pits, of which five were intact. A section excavated across the kiln revealed that it was an elaborate down-draft kiln constructed on a foundation of a brick rubble insulation layer (152). At the centre of the kiln was a large central collecting circular brick flue or chimney (165), and directly to the north-west was a connecting diagonal collecting subterranean flue (156) that drew off the collected heat, which would then lead to an underground flue and chimney (Fig. 12). The circular kiln was then constructed over the top of the central collecting circular and subterranean flues. Above this was an elaborate interconnecting flue structure, constructed within the kiln’s brick floor and comprising orange-brown refractory bricks. The central collecting circular brick flue (165) was capped by a very large orange-brown refractory tile. Inserted into the outer kiln wall was a ring of ash pits that would have been located directly under the fire boxes.

The combination of sherds of ‘art pottery’ with coloured glazes and moulded yellow wares from (152), situated beneath Kiln 3 (Fig. 13), suggest a later, probably

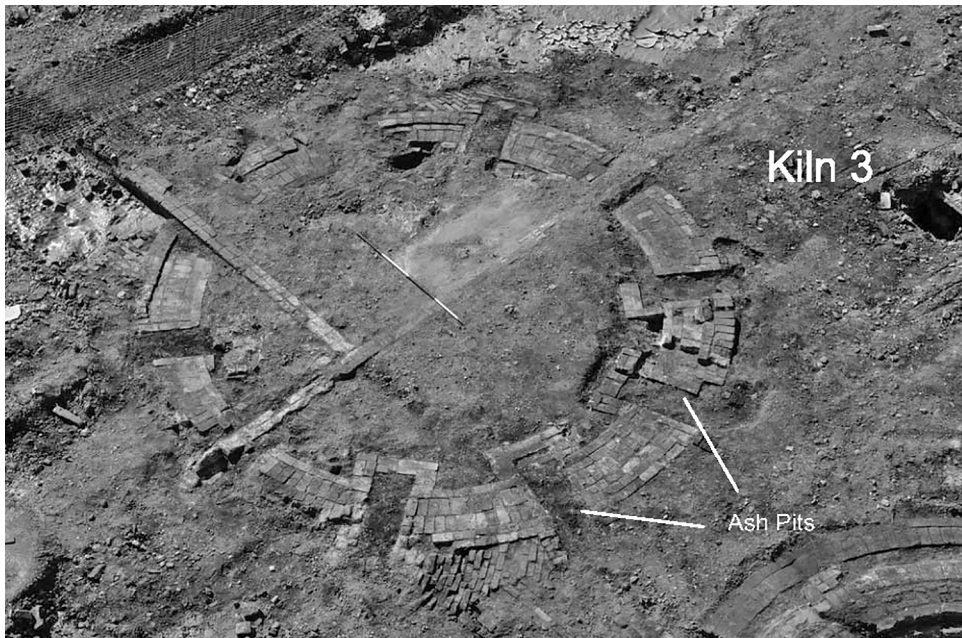


Fig. 12. Kiln 3 viewed from the north-east.



Fig. 13. South-west to north-east section across Kiln 3 showing flues.

twentieth century, date. The presence of an impressed 'Lount Ware' mark on one of the yellow ware bases seems to confirm this, and probably dates to the years 1911–19 when the Trivett Pottery Co. Ltd operated from the Coleorton works (Barker 2014).

KILN 4

Kiln 4 (Figs 11 and 14) was located to the south-west corner of the Lount Pottery site, and was the northerly of the two north–south aligned circular features depicted on the 1903 OS map. The kiln measured 7m in diameter and the northern edge of the kiln was partially damaged by the insertion of the later wall. A section was excavated across the centre of the kiln and revealed that it was constructed on a foundation of a brick rubble insulation layer (171) 0.30m deep. At the centre of the kiln, a large collecting circular brick flue or chimney (172) had been constructed (Fig. 15). Directly to the north-west was a connecting subterranean flue (173) that drew off the collected heat which led to an underground flue and chimney. The flue comprised a linear brick vaulted arch structure aligned north-west to south-east that measured 0.80m high and 0.90m wide. A circular kiln was constructed over the top of the collecting circular flue or chimney and flue passage. Inside the kiln were the remains of what would have been an elaborate interconnecting flue structure within this down-draught kiln. Refractory bricks had been used in the construction, and are almost identical to the arrangement of flues and structures found in Kiln 3.

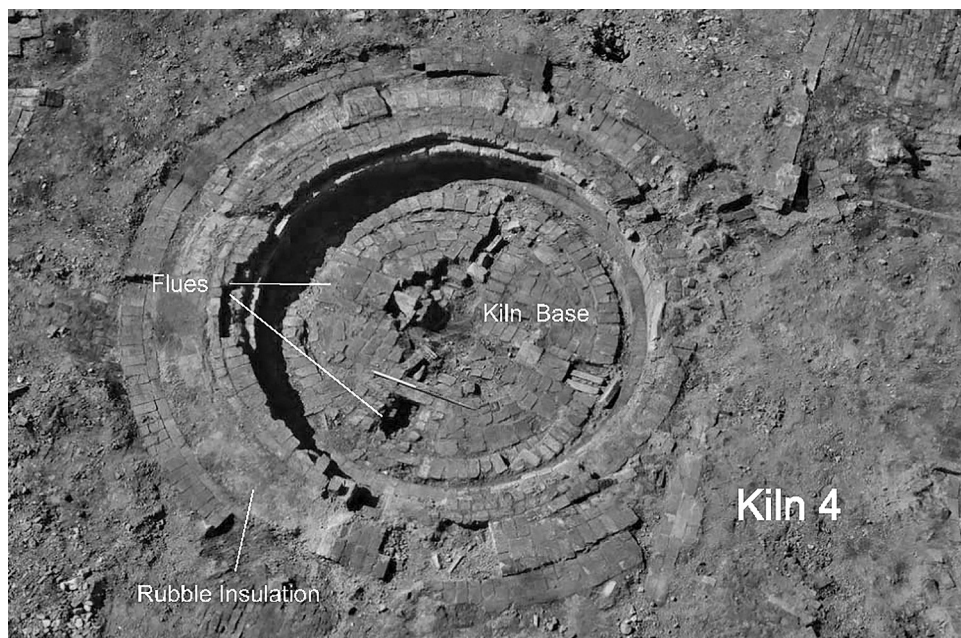


Fig. 14. Kiln 4 viewed from the north-east.

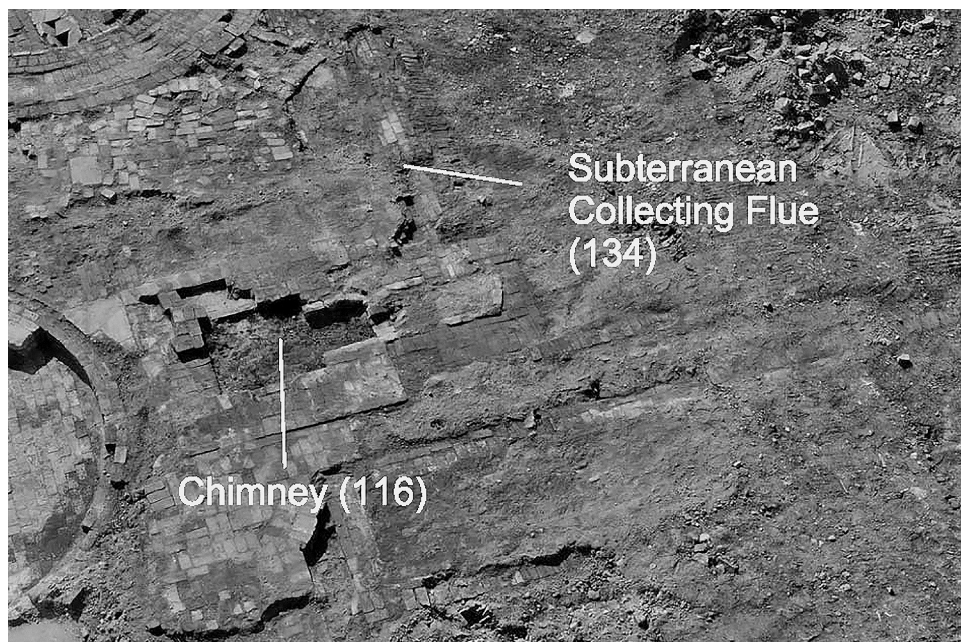


Fig. 15. Chimney base (116) and collecting flue (134) viewed from the north.

A kiln brick floor, comprising orange-brown refractory bricks and half bricks laid in random pattern and one course deep, overlay the flue structure. There were no visible ash pit foundations inserted into the perimeter of the kiln and they may have been removed when it was demolished. The outer wall did have patches of burning signs of intense heat, which could indicate the location of fire pits.

SUBTERRANEAN FLUE STRUCTURE AND CHIMNEY

As part of the down-draft structure a large connecting subterranean linear flue (134) had been constructed directly to the west of Kilns 3, 4 and 5 (Figs 16 and 17). The principal function of this flue was to gather up heat for exhaust through a chimney. The heat had been gathered up and drawn away from individual diagonal flue passages constructed under each kiln, which were all connected to the large linear flue (134). The heat was drawn along the flue by a chimney (116), which was found at the northern end of the main subterranean flue structure, comprising a chimney stack, base and connecting flue.

The conversion of the new kilns, from up-draft to down-draft kilns, demonstrates a major technological advancement for pottery works. These new kilns, together with a major expansion of the factory floor space, represented a significant investment in the Coleorton pottery works, and demonstrates a degree of vision and cost awareness on the part of the owners.



Fig. 16. Subterranean flue (134) connecting the three kilns. Flue 111 joins Kiln 5.

It was during this period that the Pottery works changed ownership, as documentary sources indicate the site was operated by ‘Stewart Brothers’ from 1885 to 1898. The site continued to manufacture yellow ware and Rockingham ware (Stewart 2013, 35). From 1898 until 1904 the Pottery works were leased to Grinhaff Brent & Co., who made Leicestershire Fireproof red ware, buff, lustre and mottled ware, plus an ‘Ashby Grained ware’. Evidence of this type of ceramic was recovered from beneath Kiln 3 (152) and was marked Lount Ware/England/Leadless glaze/Fire Proof.

Records from this period suggest that ‘Minerva Art ware by Carlo Manzoni’ was produced at this site for a short while following a fire at the Granville Pottery in Hanley. The product was also advertised for sale by Coleorton Pottery Company (Stewart 2013). Evidence of this type of production was not found on the site and only 11 sherds of ‘Art ware’ were recovered from under Kiln 3 (152).

Mason Cash occupied the Pottery in 1904, but it appears that the Pottery was only used for the removal of the clay resource associated with pottery, which was taken for use at their factory based in Church Gresley (Stewart 2013, 49).

Phase 4: Early twentieth century: final phase of pottery manufacture

KILN 5

The last major development on the site appears to be the construction of a third new down-draft kiln. Kiln 5 was also located in the south-west corner of the pottery site and can be identified as a third circular feature that appears on a 1923 OS map,

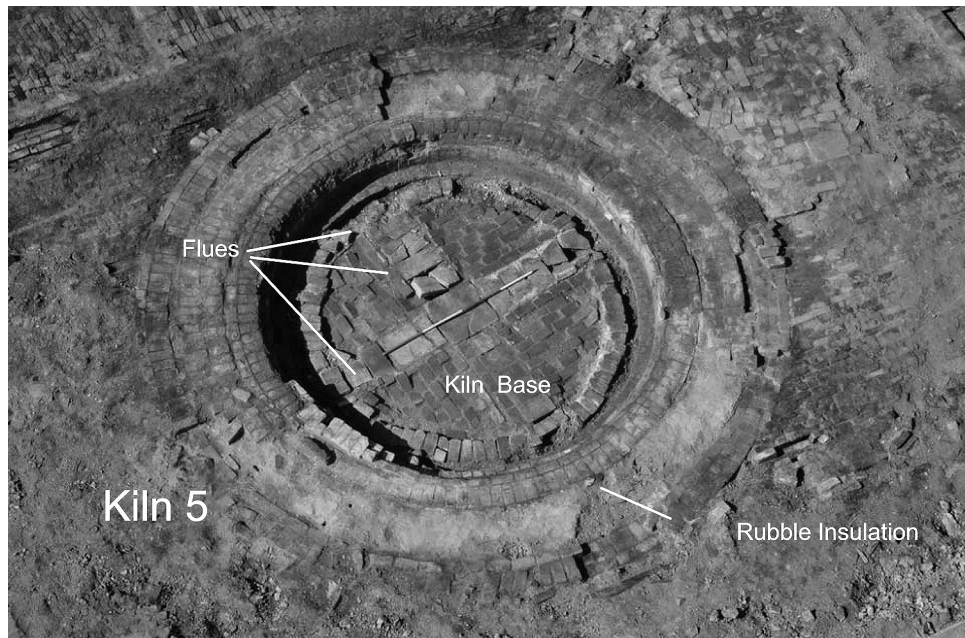


Fig. 17. Kiln 5 viewed from the south-east.

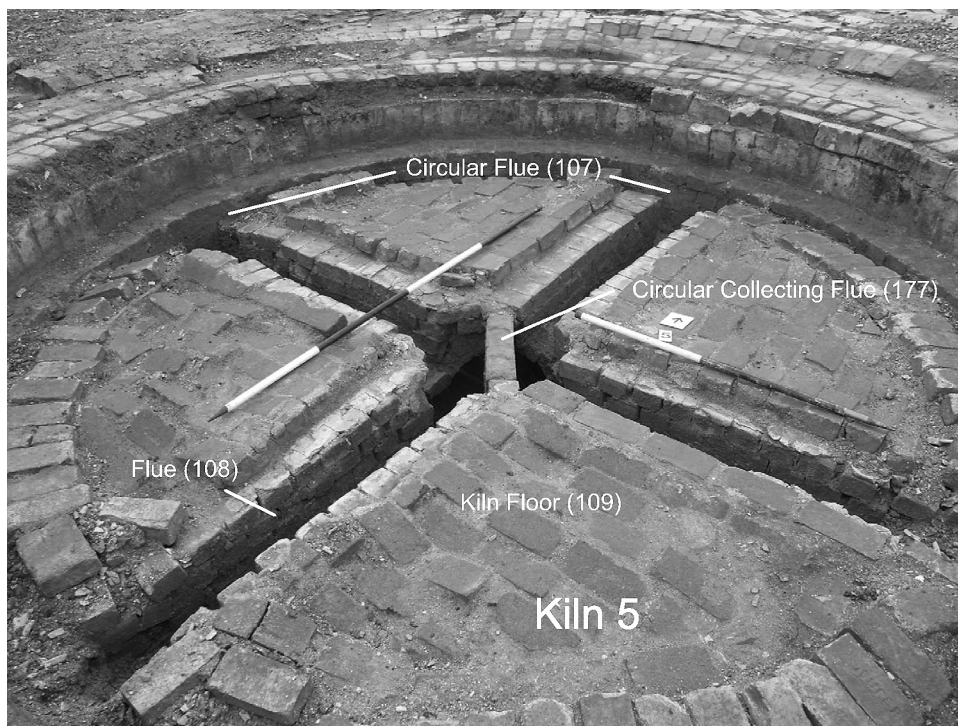


Fig. 18. Kiln 5 showing internal flues.

located directly to the north of Kilns 3 and 4, and adjacent to the flue structure chimney (Figs 12 and 18). This kiln measured 7m in diameter and included internal down-draught flues (107; 108) with a circular collecting flue (177). This led to a wide flue (111), connected to the subterranean flue leading to the chimney (Fig. 18). This was almost identical to the arrangement of flues and structures found within Kiln 4.

As was the case with Kiln 4, there were no visible ash pit foundations inserted into the perimeter of the kiln, and they may have been removed when it was demolished. The outer wall of the kiln did show areas of burning, which may signify signs of intense heat from the location of fire pits. The cartographic evidence suggests that this kiln may have been the last major development on the site.

An undated photograph, believed to date from the very late 1920s or early 1930s (Fig. 19), shows the Coleorton Pottery workforce seated and standing in front of a workshop and two kilns. The photograph is taken looking eastward, and the kilns behind the workforce appear to be Kilns 3 and 4. The kiln on the left of the photograph is clearly a downdraft kiln (Kiln 4), comprising a cylindrical firing chamber with a low domed roof and a separate free-standing chimney served by a subterranean flue. Kilns of this type are often associated with the firing of unglazed bricks and tiles, or salt-glazed stoneware vessels or drain pipes (D. Barker pers. comm.). The kiln on the right is Kiln 3, a larger bottle up-draft kiln.



Fig. 19. Undated photograph of the Coleorton Pottery workforce in front of Kilns 3 (right) and 4.

THE CERAMICS (David Barker)

The number of sherds recovered is comparatively small, the vessels are relatively incomplete, and only a small part of the assemblage derives from stratified archaeological contexts. The majority of the wares (approximately 304 sherds or 57 per cent) recovered are of refined yellow ware (Fig. 20). Yellow ware forms in the Coleorton assemblage include dishes, baking dishes, bowls, basins, chamber pots, mugs, a possible jug, blacking pots, oval dishes or pans in a range of sizes, and a large number of moulded mixing bowls with diagnostic moulded exterior bodies and rims. The production of a wide range of sanitary wares by the yellow ware potteries of South Derbyshire is well-known and five sherds of yellow ware toilet bowls were recovered.

Brown-glazed Rockingham wares are another type well associated with the south Derbyshire potteries (Fig. 20). Although documented as a product at Coleorton, Rockingham wares make up only 25 per cent of the ceramics recovered. The range of forms is extremely limited, comprising, for the most part, plain-bodied teapots and covers. However, three further Rockingham sherds have applied moulded reliefs – or sprigs – in white clay with additional under-glaze colours. These appear to be the type of ware known to collectors as ‘Measham Ware’ or ‘Barge Ware’, so-named because of the use of vessels of this type on canal boats and its sale to boat people from a shop in Measham in Leicestershire (Lewis 1969, 167). Most Measham Ware was

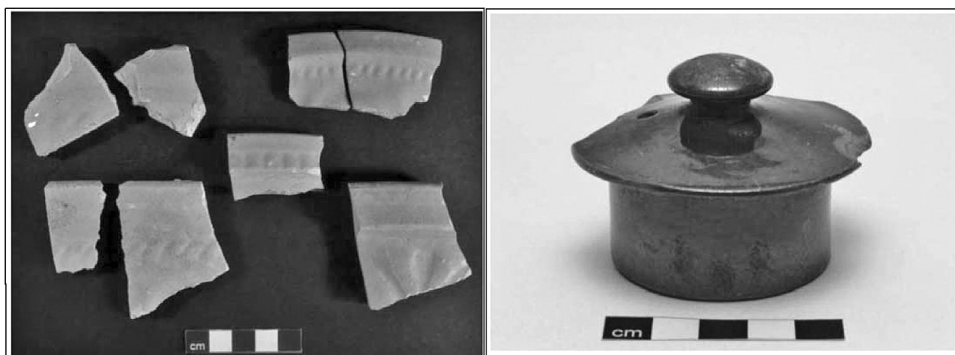


Fig. 20. Examples of yellow- and brown-glazed Rockingham wares recovered at Coleorton.

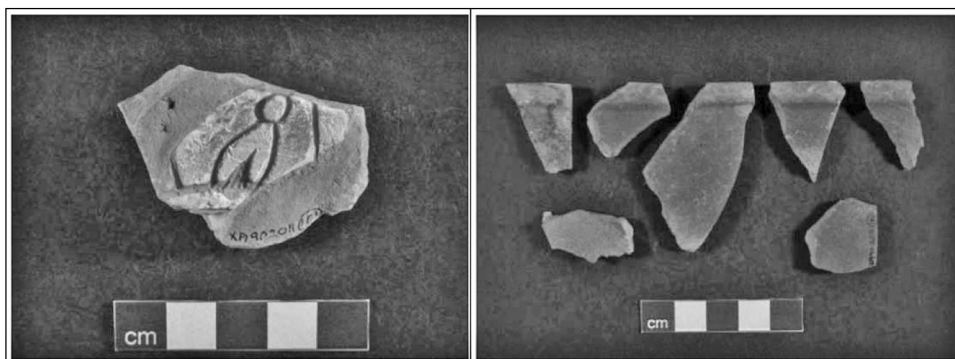


Fig. 21. Examples of 'art pottery' recovered at Coleorton.

produced in Church Gresley and Woodville, Derbyshire, between *c.*1870 and 1914. The possibility that the decorative so-called 'Measham Ware' was made at the factory is note-worthy and may suggest the wider manufacture of this type (Barker 2014).

A single sherd of horticultural ware is probably a flower pot. Despite the rouletted decoration, too little of this large form survives for a positive identification. This may be the sole piece of physical evidence for the latest production at Coleorton, the 'garden pottery and ornamental ware' made between 1936 and 1938 by the Coleorton Pottery Ltd (Stewart 2013).

A limited range of material which might be described as 'art pottery' has been recovered – 55 sherds – although none of it is particularly diagnostic and the terminology to adequately describe it is lacking (Fig. 21). None of the forms were particularly diagnostic, but include plant pots, bowls, vases and other forms in buff or orange fabrics, and with coloured glazes in blue, turquoise and green (Barker 2014).

It is unclear whether any of the white-bodied earthenware, or whiteware, sherds were made at Coleorton. Possible candidates for manufacture here are two coarser white-bodied sherds which have the appearance of sponge dish liners with a flanged rim and perforations, but the identification is far from certain, and it is not impossible that these are examples of the 'earthenware components for gas mantles



Fig. 22. Salt-glazed ware items from Coleorton.

and other lighting equipment’ or of the ‘electrical lighting equipment’, which are documented as products of the Clay Ring Co. (1919–28) and the Coleorton Pottery Co. Ltd (1928–36) respectively (Stewart 2013). Two further sherds with opaque white glazes are of uncertain forms, and may be items of sanitary, electrical or other industrial wares.

Some of the material recovered from the excavation hints at the manufacture of salt-glazed wares at Coleorton (Fig. 22). This is not incontrovertible proof of salt-glaze stoneware manufacture at Coleorton, but there is a possibility that this took place at some time later in the factory’s life (Barker 2014).

A number of distinctive stilts and spurs recovered from the excavation are mass-produced, machine-made items, bought-in from specialist kiln furniture manufacturers operating in the north Staffordshire Potteries. The presence of Staffordshire-made kiln furniture on this and other manufacturing sites throughout the British Isles, and beyond, underlines the importance of this area to pottery manufacturers across much of the globe. The Staffordshire industry was sufficiently large and well-established to support the full range of essential ancillary trades, including, from the mid-nineteenth century, the manufacture of stilts, spurs and other items of kiln furniture. Pottery factories in north Staffordshire and beyond would have found it more economical and efficient to buy in these items en masse than to attempt their manufacture themselves.

All the finds found associated with all the kilns suggest that they all were decommissioned in the twentieth century, which was consistent with pottery works records of production.

CONCLUSION

The excavation at Lount has provided significant information on the evolution of Coleorton Pottery industry and complements the recently published history of the Pottery (Stewart 2013). It has been a rare opportunity to excavate kiln bases in Leicestershire which had far fewer pottery works compared to, for example, north Staffordshire. The excavation has shown how the kilns developed from up-draft to down-draft types between c.1880 and 1920. The two technologies may have continued side by side as the manufacture of yellow and Rockingham ware continued

well into the twentieth century, with firing probably continuing in these two updraft kilns, with the down-draft kilns being reserved for newer unglazed bricks and tiles, salt-glazed stoneware vessels or drain pipes, which were perhaps more profitable.

Coleorton Pottery was part of an extensive group of pottery industries that grew to prominence during the nineteenth century within the Ashby Woulds area, straddling the Derbyshire–Leicestershire border (Smith 1965, 142). The large expansion of the coal industry stimulated the growth of brick and earthenware manufacture in two ways. First, coal mining unearthed quantities of clays of varying properties; and, second, there was much unsaleable coal which could be used in the kilns (Nixon 1969, 88). By the turn of the eighteenth century, brick and earthenware manufacture at Church Gresley and Swadlincote was becoming established. The Swadlincote area had three large firms, including John Knowles and Co. (Wooden Box), that were producing refractory and stoneware products (Nixon 1969, 88). Together with the south Derbyshire industry centred on Swadlincote and Church Gresley, Coleorton was a significant manufacturer of yellow ware during the nineteenth century (Campion 2006, 250). During the twentieth century industrial wares, including gas mantles and electrical insulators, were added to the range of products. The pottery recovered was not a large assemblage from a factory which was in operation for 100 years, even a factory of a comparatively modest size. It is clear that the bulk of the waste material which must have been generated over the life of the factory must have been deposited ‘off-site’ and in locations still to be identified. Nevertheless, these finds do add to the picture of the Pottery, its products and the wider industrial context within which it functioned.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The fieldwork was carried out by Tim Higgins, assisted by Jamie Patrick, Scott Lomax, Roger Kipling and Mathew Morris. The pottery and miscellaneous finds were identified by David Barker. I would like to thank John MacDonald, David Ash and Samuel T. Stewart for their help and advice on Coleorton Pottery, and Martyn Pask of Bellway Homes for his help and co-operation. The paper was edited by Mireya Gonzalez Rodriguez and Patrick Clay, who also managed the project. The site archive will be held with the Leicestershire County Council, under the accession number X.A90.2011.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Barker, D., 2014 | ‘The Ceramics’, in T. Higgins 2014, 51–69. |
| Campion, G., 2006 | ‘The Modern Period (1750–2000)’, in N. J. Cooper (ed.), 2006, 237–58. |
| Clay, P., 2010 | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Work for Land at the Former Lisk Controls site Nottingham Road, Lount, Leicestershire (NGR: SK 3860 1920)</i> . ULAS Specification 11-684. |
| Cooper, N. J. (ed.), 2006 | <i>The Archaeology of the East Midlands. An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda</i> . Leicester Archaeology Monograph 13. |

- Higgins, T., 2011 *An Archaeological Evaluation of the Former Lisk Controls Site, formerly Coleorton Pottery, Lount, Leicestershire* (NGR SK 386 192). ULAS Report No. 2011-113.
- Higgins, T., 2014 *An Archaeological Excavation at the Former Lisk Controls Site, Nottingham Road, Lount, Leicestershire* (NGR: SK 3680 1920). ULAS Report No. 2014-054.
- Hunt, L., 2011 *An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment for Land at the Former Lisk Controls Site, Nottingham Road, Lount, Leicestershire* (NGR: SK3860 1920). ULAS Report No. 2011-034.
- Nixon, F., 1969 *The Industrial Archaeology of Derbyshire*. Newton Abbot: David & Charles Ltd.
- Rhodes, D., 1968 *Kilns Design, Construction and Operation*. Pitman Publishing: USA.
- Richards, G., 2011 *An Archaeological Standing Building Survey of the Former Lisk Controls Site, formerly Coleorton Pottery, Lount, Leicestershire* (NGR SK 386 192). ULAS Report No. 2011-112.
- Richards, G. and Hyam, A., 2012 *An Additional Archaeological Standing Building Survey of the Former Lisk Controls Site, formerly Coleorton Pottery, Lount, Leicestershire* (NGR SK 386 193). ULAS Report No. 2012-025.
- Smith, D. M., 1965 *The Industrial Archaeology of The East Midlands (Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and adjoining parts of Derbyshire)*. Dawlish: David Charles Ltd.
- Stewart, S., 2013 *Coleorton Pottery 1835–1938*. Samuel T. Stewart, 2013.