

The Cistercian ware products of Ticknall, South Derbyshire

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SUMMARY

Field walking on various sites at Ticknall, South Derbyshire, has revealed several clusters of kiln fabric and wasters. The pottery industry at Ticknall is thought to have spanned from the 15th to the 19th centuries. At least two kilns at Ticknall produced Cistercian and Midlands Purple wares. Emphasis will be placed on the Peat's Close kiln, which appears to be one of the earlier Cistercian ware producers in the village. The Ticknall pottery is compared here to the Cistercian ware products of Yorkshire. A fuller account of the Ticknall Cistercian wares will be included in the author's PhD thesis.

INTRODUCTION

For some time Janet Spavold and Sue Brown have been collecting and investigating the pottery from Ticknall. The pottery they collected was used in this study. Through their analysis of documentary sources, it is believed around eight potters were working in the area by the 1530s (as indicated by tax returns between 1538 and 1547 held by Derbyshire County Record Office, record no. D7760x22/5). To date there has been only one (currently unpublished) excavation at a Ticknall site (by Deirdre O'Sullivan of Leicester University at Heath End), and the pottery from this has also been reviewed.

The natural resources required by potters were abundant at Ticknall, making it a prime position for such activity. There were plentiful supplies of coppice wood, outcroppings of coal, refractory material for kiln furniture and finer clays for the pottery; the lead required for glaze also was abundant in Derbyshire (Crossley 1990, 246).

THE KILN SITES

Several areas of potting activity have been identified, and a few of these sites can be linked to Cistercian, Midlands Purple, Black and Yellow ware production. These sites are known as Peat's Close, Narrow Lane and Scaddowes, and the Mariott-Hill potters' site on Hazard Hill. At one time all of these sites were under the ownership of the Harpur-Crewe

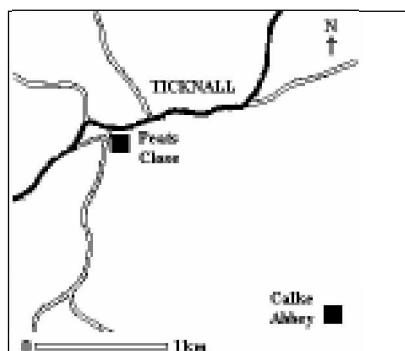
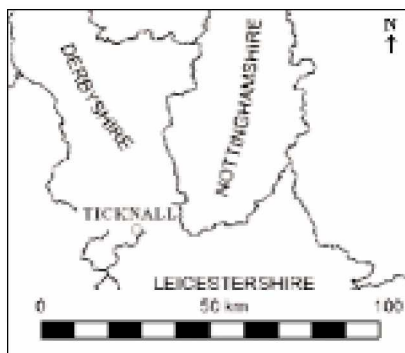


Fig. 1 a & b Location maps of the Peat's Close kiln in Ticknall, South Derbyshire.¹

estate, but subsequently all but Peat's Close have been sold (pers. comm. Janet Spavold and Sue Brown). Clusters of Cistercian ware and Midlands Purple wasters are known from other sites in the village: it seems that kiln waste was used to repair roads, and is frequently found as dump deposits (pers. comm. Janet Spavold and Sue Brown).

The location of the Peat's Close site is shown in Fig. 1a & b. The physical evidence left by the Peat's Close kiln is scant. A few surviving bricks would suggest a permanent kiln structure having been erected on the site as do a number of kiln props which are identical to those used at the Yorkshire kilns (Moorhouse and Slowikowski 1992, fig. 79, nos 1-3, 139). The most compelling evidence of production activity on this site is a concentration of wasters and saggars. At Chilvers Coton, Warwickshire and Wrenthorpe, Yorkshire (Mayes and Scott 1984, and Moorhouse and Slowikowski 1992) multi-flued kilns are known to have been used to fire Cistercian wares. The Peat's Close kiln was probably of this same type.

THE CERAMIC ASSEMBLAGE

After ten years of field walking the volume of material associated with the Peat's Close kiln is vast. A sample of the kiln material was collected including several examples of each vessel form and associated decorative elements. As the kiln site has not been excavated, the pottery cannot be linked with any structural or stratigraphically recorded features, which makes dating very difficult.

Fabric and Glaze

The following description offers a basic insight to the most common fabric and glaze types (Table 1). The Ticknall clays (associated with the Derbyshire coal measures deposits) are recognised as being of very high quality (Sylvester-Bradley and Ford 1968, 104). There are three main clay colours found at Ticknall: white (iron-free), red and yellow clay. It is probable that more than one outcrop of red clay exists, accounting for the fact that some of the bodies contain white flecks (see below). Due to the abundant clay sources at Ticknall, the range of finished pottery colours is vast and the assemblage has been divided into 12 fabrics and glazes. The majority of vessels are highly fired with a hard purple fabric and glossy brown glaze (CW1).

Fabrics CW10 and CW3 represent reduced sherds. Examples of vessels with the characteristics of CW3 are known from the Brewhouse Yard museum in Nottingham.² These have been reduced during firing to the point the metal components of the glaze have started to leach out, creating a matt metallic sheen (Henderson 2000, 126). CW9 appears to be an underfired version of the more common purple bodies; these wares have an orange body with a green, or

light brown, glaze. This may have been done deliberately or was the result of firing these vessels in a certain area of the kiln; a similar phenomenon has been noted at Wrenthorpe (Moorhouse and Slowikowski 1992, 91). RCW1 represents the reverse Cistercian ware that was present, which appears to develop into a Yellow ware industry at the site. Some pots have purple and white marbled clay bodies. This may have been a deliberate attempt to produce an unusual finish, although it perhaps represents the potter using up clay remnants.

Glazes can appear matt, glossy or satin in finish. Further analysis will be needed to discover if the typical brown/black glaze is entirely dictated by the iron content of the body, as suggested at Silcoates, or if extra iron was added to the lead glaze (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 37). Recent studies suggest the iron content of the clay was sufficient to create the brown black colour of the glaze.

A typical characteristic of the Ticknall pots is the presence of white flecks visible through the glaze. The white flecks within the fabric cannot be used as a diagnostic feature of the Ticknall pots as it is now realised that Cistercian ware products from other kilns also share this characteristic. However, the forms and decoration of the Ticknall pots can be used as sufficient indicators of provenance.

The Midlands Purple vessels from Ticknall have a very similar fabric to the Cistercian ware vessels, and there are many Midlands Purple pieces from Ticknall that have characteristics of Cistercian ware. This is mirrored in the products found at the Coventry Whitefriars site where it was concluded that the Cistercian wares and Midlands Purple fabrics were practically indistinguishable from one another, and that a more apt name for Cistercian wares would be 'developed Midlands Purple ware' (Woodfield 1981, 110). Fabric CW8 (Table 1) shares this same property. The only feature by which the CW8 Cistercian ware and the Midlands Purple ware can be separated is in the kind of form produced. At Ticknall the two ware types are more distinct, and the coarser fabric is used for larger vessels. However, there are examples where the distinction is not always so clear. For example, a typical Midlands Purple cistern, with a glossy Cistercian ware glaze was found at the Marriott-Hill site, and Cistercian ware decoration features on a Midlands Purple jug from the Brewhouse Yard Museum in Nottingham.³

The Ticknall pots are wheel thrown, as indicated from concentric removal marks on some bases. There are traces of sand adhering to the glaze of others. This again reflects similar techniques used at the Yorkshire kilns.

Form and Decoration

The initial comment about the Ticknall Cistercian wares has to be how different they are from the Yorkshire examples in terms of decoration and, in some cases, form. The decoration from the Peat's Close pottery is of a very high

Table 1 Pottery and glaze descriptions of the Peat's Close Cistercian wares

Clay colour	Fabric	Glaze	Inclusions	Code
White clay	Cream to buff	Light yellow to light green		RCW1
Coal measures red clay	Purple	Glossy brown		CW1
	Purple, vitrified	Lustrous dark brown to black		CW2
	Purple to purple-brown	Matt metallic finish with brown/black splotches		CW3
	Brown-purple to brown, semi-vitrified	Dark brown	Small white flecks	CW4
	Brown	brown to black		CW5
	Brown	Greeny-brown	Frequent speckles	CW6
	Brown-red	Glossy brown	Sand	CW7
	Light purpley brown	Brown to purple glaze		CW8
	Orange	Green to light brown	White flecks	CW9
	Grey to brown	Dirty khaki green		CW10
Yellow clays	Orange	Green		CW11

Based on the author's observations and the work of M. Pearson (1997) and D. Keen (1997)

quality. There are a few examples of the Peat's Close wares that are not executed so precisely, and it is possible they are apprentice pieces. As on some of the Yorkshire sherds, remaining fingerprints appear to be child or woman sized. It is not impossible to believe that the Peat's Close potter was a woman, or at least a woman applied the decoration.

The forms produced by the Ticknall potters were similar to the Yorkshire products only in fundamentals, and tend to have thicker bodies than their northern counterparts. Unsurprisingly, cups were the most abundant product: posset pots (Fig. 2, no. 3) and the ubiquitous 'type four' two handled cups (see Fig. 2, no. 2) appeared most commonly. Stylistically there are differences from the Yorkshire wares. Two handled tankards appear to be absent from the Peat's Close repertoire, instead 'schnellen' type tankards with one handle were produced. Three handled tankards (Fig. 2, no. 1) feature in a variety of sizes and were made at the Narrow Lane site. It is not certain the latter were made at Peat's

Close. Interestingly, some of the tankards appear to have rim appropriate for seating a lid.

All handles were attached by luting and were occasionally 'thumbed' at the lower join. The occurrence of chalices/cup salts and pedestal cups (Fig. 2, no. 5) was also high amongst the Peat's Close products.

The most notable absence was of figurines, even though the Yorkshire examples are rare themselves. All the Yorkshire Cistercian ware figures the author has reviewed were salts. Yellow ware heads that decorated chafing dishes and large cups were produced at Narrow Lane, the Hanson-Marriott site and Scaddowes, but nothing of the sort appears in Cistercian ware. This is of interest as the salt figurines were obviously desirable. At Derby, Full Street (Coppack 1972) the majority of cups and jugs came from Ticknall. An exception was a Yorkshire figurine salt in feature 15 (Coppack 1972, fig. 19. 241, the salt base is shown upside down). The one suspected example of a salt from Ticknall (Fig. 2, no. 6) shows

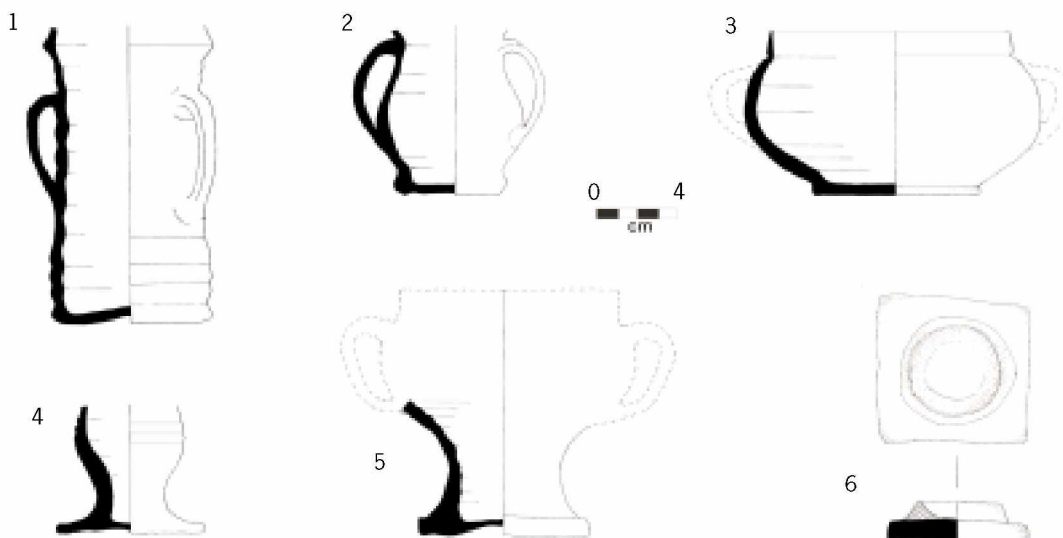


Fig. 2 Pottery from Ticknall. 1: Three handled tankard with a deeply ribbed body from the Narrow Lane site 2: Type four cup from Peat's Close, 3: Posset pot from Peat's Close, 4: Possible transitional Cistercian to Blackware piece, 5: Pedestal cup, 6: Salt from Peat's Close.

a form concerned with function rather than display. It is possible that some of the recovered tall faceted cup stems belong to cup salts, and not chalices. Some of the identified forms are less characteristic of the Cistercian ware tradition. These include pipkins and dishes from Peat's Close, and albarellos from Marriott-Hill, although these all may be later vessels. An example of a puzzle mug with a hollow rim was also discovered at Peat's Close.

The most impressive aspect of the Peat's Close material is in the application and style of the decoration that was used. It is the decorative elements of the Peat's Close pots that really set them apart from the Yorkshire wares. As discussed previously, the abundance of clay sources in Ticknall allowed a greater scope for colour in terms of applied decoration.

Blobs of yellow clay slip and iron staining were used to enhance applied pads of iron-free clay. Sometimes stamps were used directly on the body of the pot (Fig. 3, no. 3). A variety of designs were used. The expected 'wheel' stamp occurs (Fig. 3, no. 6), as well as stabbed and rouletted strips (often finely applied and impressed with a 'zipper' motif). Applied flowers, leaves and berries, often two-tone in colour, were produced using stamps or applied pads of clay (Fig. 3, no. 4). More unusual examples include applied fish on posset pots (Fig. 3, no. 1), and applied dogs on lids (Fig. 3, no. 2). 'IHS' stamps in oval and hexagonal borders were also found. The former design is present in the Peat's Close material.

Two of the more unusual decorative devices appear to have been copied at, or copied from the Yorkshire products. At the Rockley Smithies, Yorkshire, a 'snowflake' stamp was recovered (a cast of which is housed at Wakefield Museum: for details of the excavation see Crossley and Ashurst 1968).

A very similar example is present at Ticknall (Fig. 3, no. 5). It is known that Ticknall Cistercian wares did travel as far as Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, so this may be a Ticknall product. Equally an IHS stamp found at Pontefract Priory (again housed at Wakefield) was distinctly different from the known Ticknall examples (Fig. 3, no. 7), but indicates the

same ideas were being used on Cistercian wares produced at different places.

DATING

Dating the products of the Peat's Close kiln, or any of the Ticknall kilns, is problematic. The main dating evidence for the Cistercian ware comes from two excavations: Derby, Full Street (Coppack 1972) and Leicester, Austin Friars (Woodland 1981). At Derby, Full Street practically all the Cistercian ware appears to be from Ticknall. In pit 23, Ticknall Cistercian and Midlands Purple wares were dated from the late 15th to the 16th century. The Yorkshire figurine from feature 15 fits into this date range (Coppack 1972, fig. 19, 241), as demonstrated at Sandal Castle, where a figurine like this appeared in contexts 'deposited some time after the 1480s' (Brears 1983, 215 and fig. 94, 40). It would seem that the Ticknall Cistercian wares run contemporary to the Yorkshire Cistercian wares. The Austin Friars excavation provided a much earlier date for the appearance of Cistercian wares. The earliest context they appear in (7A) was dated to c. 1450. Whilst there is some evidence for Cistercian wares appearing in mid 15th-century contexts in the Midlands, it is not necessarily the Ticknall products that are represented in these early layers. Looking at the collection from the Austin Friars, the pieces that have definite Ticknall characteristics appear in phase 9A at the earliest. This deposit fits with the Derby, Full Street contexts by providing a late 15th to 16th-century date. Stylistically speaking the forms appear no more 'developed' than the Yorkshire pieces. The IHS stamps provide an indication of a late 15th-century production date. The main date range for items displaying 'IHS' is thought to be in the region of c.1475 to 1539 (pers. comm. John Hurst).

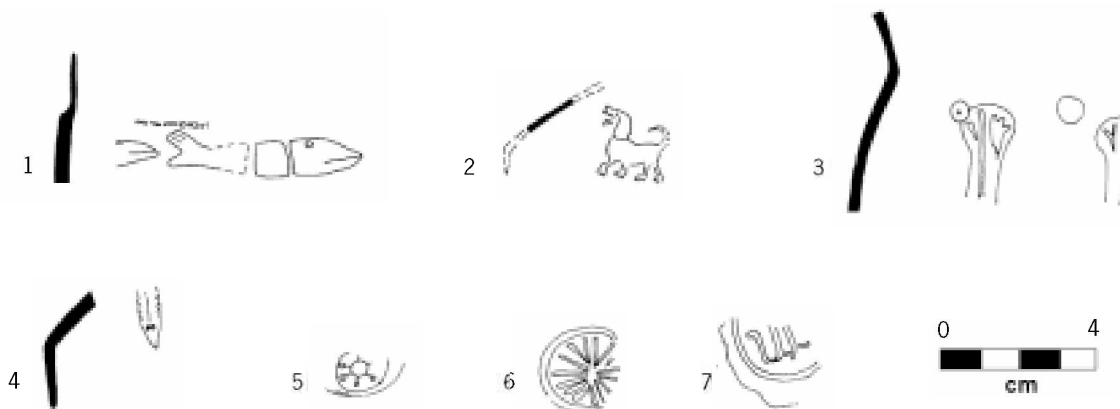


Fig. 3 Decorative elements from Peat's Close. 1: Posset pot with possible herring decoration, 2: Posset lid possibly depicting a French Spaniel (based on an illustration by A. MacCormick), 3: Type four cup with organic decoration, 4: Lid with unspecified (? feather) decoration, 5: Snowflake stamp, 6: Wheel stamp, 7: IHS stamp in a circular frame.

The problem with the Ticknall Cistercian wares is the same as at all other known producers; they appear in the later 15th century fully developed with no prior build-up to their manufacture. It is equally compelling that the method of producing Cistercian wares appears to be uniform between geographically diverse production sites. It is entirely possible that there is another Cistercian ware kiln on the site that will provide clues to how this industry started, although Yorkshire is equally favoured for their birthplace. The Mariott-Hill production appears to be later in date than Peat's Close, as it continues long into the post-medieval period. This means that, as the evidence stands, Peat's Close cannot be proven to have produced Cistercian wares earlier than the later 15th century.

CONCLUSION

Though this study has dealt only briefly with the Cistercian ware products of Ticknall, it is evident they are indicative of a thriving post-medieval pottery industry. It is hoped this article demonstrates the wealth of material that awaits research in Ticknall, and encourages further study of this prolific rural industry.

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¹ Map 1a reproduced from Ordnance Survey map data by permission of the Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright 2001, 1b reproduced by kind permission of Ordnance Survey. Crown Copyright. NC/04/23928.

² Brewhouse Yard Museum object id.: NCM 1966-170/22; NCM 1897-57; NCM 1966-170.

³ Brewhouse Yard Museum object id: NCM 161-310

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Résumé

La prospection au sol sur divers sites à Ticknall dans le South Derbyshire a révélé plusieurs concentrations de composants de four et ratés de cuisson. L'industrie céramique à Ticknall a duré du 15^{ème} au 19^{ème} siècle. A Ticknall, au moins deux fours produisaient de la poterie cistercienne et de type « Midlands Purple ». L'accent sera mis ici sur l'atelier de Peat's Close qui semble être le plus ancien des producteurs de poterie cistercienne dans le village. La poterie de Ticknall est comparée à la céramique cistercienne du Yorkshire. Un compte-rendu plus détaillé de cette poterie cistercienne de Ticknall fera parti de la thèse de l'auteur.

Zusammenfassung

Feldbegehungen an verschiedenen Stellen in Ticknall, South Derbyshire, haben Gruppen von Ofenteilen und Ausschuß

offenbart. Die Töpfereiherstellung in Ticknall, so denkt man, reichte vom 15. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert. Wenigstens zwei der Öfen in Ticknall produzierten Zisterzienser und Midland-Purpurware. Im Zentrum steht der Ofen in Peat's Close, indem, wie es scheint,

frühe Zisterzienserware hergestellt wurde. Die Ticknall Töpferware wird hier mit Zisterzienserprodukten aus Yorkshire verglichen. Ein in Einzelheiten gehender Bericht über die Ticknall Zisterzienserware wird in der PhD-Arbeit des Autors erscheinen.

