

isotope analysis (Wiegand), X-ray powder diffraction (Heimann), ED-XRF and WD-XRF (Hall), portable XRF (Holmqvist), particle-induced X-ray emission (Rizzutto and Tabacniks), spectrometry (Golitzko and Dussubieux), neutron activation analysis (Minc and Sterba), and synchrotron radiation (Greene). As it is possible to see from the quick overview above, each chapter analyses a specific method, showing its advantages and its limitations – the latter mostly related to costs and the destructive nature of certain analytical methods. This part is undoubtedly dense for those who are not experts in scientific methods, but all the chapters are characterised by clear examples and numerous tables and charts, thus making everything easily understandable. Part five regards ceramic manufacture, and this topic is discussed using both ethnography (Fowler), and scientific methods of analysis, such as experimental firing and re-firing (Daszkiewicz and Maritan), infrared spectroscopy (Shoval), Raman spectroscopy (Van Pevenage and Vandenabeele), x-radiography (Berg and Ambers), and organic inclusions (Mariotti Lippi and Pallecchi). The presence of different interdisciplinary approaches in this part makes the explanations really effective. Similarly, part six includes three chapters about vessel function, using typologies (Martínez-Carillo and Barceló), physical approaches (Müller), and organic residual analysis (Barnard and Eerkens). Finally, part seven analyses the methods for dating ceramic assemblages: typologies (Bortolini), and direct dating methods (Blain and Hall). This last part of the volume is clearly explained, but maybe too short, especially if we consider the importance of dating ceramics.

In conclusion, on the one hand, this volume fulfils the difficult aim of an overall presentation of the many methods that can be used for studying archaeological ceramics. On the other hand, scientific methods are predominant, thus some crucial aspects such as quantification and typologies are not as detailed as we might expect. Furthermore, given that the chapters are generally really dense, the absence of cross-referring between them sometimes creates some confusion. At the same time, while the introduction brilliantly summarises the questions that structure the volume itself, the absence of a conclusive chapter leaves the reader without a clear final overview of all the answers to such questions. However, surely this volume enriches us of new perspectives about the most recent methods of ceramic analysis, demonstrating that many aspects of this field still require further research.

*Lucrezia Campagna*

**Robert Philpott with Ron Dagnall, Maurice Handley, David Higgins, Samantha Rowe, Jeff Speakman, Elizabeth Stewart and members of the St Helens Association for Historical Research**

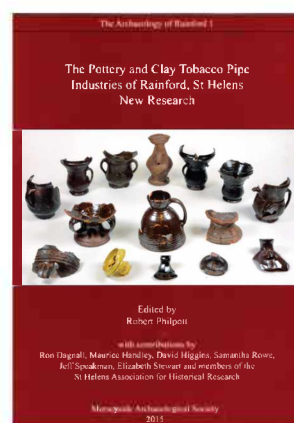
**The Pottery and Clay Tobacco Pipe Industry of Rainford, St Helens New Research**

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The Archaeology of Rainford 1.

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This substantial, well-illustrated volume is the direct outcome of the Rainford Roots Community Archaeology Project begun in 2013. It establishes for the first time that a fully-fledged Cistercian ware industry flourished in south-west Lancashire in the 16th century and went on to provide a regional hub for pottery production for the following two centuries. Although its main subject is pottery and clay pipes, the volume delivers a good deal more, providing much ancillary information from documentary sources about the potters and their lives.

The first chapter is an introduction to the Rainford Roots project, an overview of the development of the township from prehistory to the 19th century and a summary of previous archaeological work in the area. In the second Maurice Handley provides a clear and pointed account of the geology of the region and its significance for the development of the pottery industry. This includes excellent maps and diagrams as well as photographs of key sites and buildings. Chapter three by Ron Dagnall describes the history of Rainford potteries and their sites from documentary sources. In the following chapter he presents full transcriptions of six probate inventories of Rainford potters proved at Chester. The St Helens Association then adds a further 26 Rainford wills dating between 1619 and 1879.

Chapters five to seven provide the meat of the volume with over 150 pages. They present in full the results of three excavations on separate sites in Church

Road, Rainford. Sixteenth and 17th-century pottery and clay pipe dumps at No. 87, 17th-century pottery and pipes at No. 91 and 19th-century clay pipe kiln waste at the Branch Library site. Following the main text and list of references there are two appendices. The first provides a comprehensive list of potters in Rainford and the surrounding townships derived from parish and chapel registers. The second is a tabulated summary of the clay pipe evidence from the excavations at No. 87 Church Road.

To the ceramic archaeologist it is the three excavation reports that are most important as they provide clear and detailed accounts of the products of the local potteries, in many cases for the first time. The key site is No 87 Church Road. A complete faceted tyg was discovered by the owner in digging up a pear tree. This led to a research excavation carried out by staff from National Museums Liverpool and provided the stimulus for the Rainford Roots community project. 16th- and 17th-century wasted pottery together with saggars, separators and stilts were found in considerable quantity mostly preserved within boundary ditch systems and gullies. No kiln structures were located but a pottery workshop clay floor was found.

Regional archaeologists had long suspected a north-west source for the Cistercian-type wares that occur widely in 16th-century deposits. This site provides clear evidence of local production with over 3,000 sherds consisting of 27 drinking vessel forms, mugs, jugs, chafing dishes, cups, salts and lids. Many of the forms and their decoration are distinctive. There are also examples of a local copies of a *Trichterhalskrug* and a wasted imitation Siegburg drinking mug. Coarsewares are represented mainly by North West Purple ware which is a local version of Midlands Purple, with its own bodies, shapes and finishes. The main forms are jugs, bottles, cisterns and jars with occasional stamped decoration. There is also evidence for contemporary local roof tile production. The much smaller, 17th-century groups of over 400 sherds are dominated by dark-glazed coarsewares and yellow wares, the latter involving platters and cup salts. Within the over 100kg of saggars recovered at least 24 forms were identified.

In contrast, the work at No 91 Church Road involved a watching brief by National Museums Liverpool during building works on the site. Post-medieval pottery and clay pipes were recovered from the contractor's foundation trenches. There were a few 16th-century domestic sherds, but the main assemblage consisted of 17th-century pottery wasters and kiln furniture. This material expands considerably on the contemporary range found at No. 87 with a variety of fine and coarse red-bodied forms and yellow ware platters. A particularly interesting small assemblage of clay tobacco pipes was also found within which there is a collection of unsmoked pipes that appear to represent a local product of c 1680 to 1710. Some

of the pipes bear the stamp of a Henry Naylor on the underneath of the heel. Not only is this a previously unknown Rainford maker but the form of pipe, heel and stamp are very close to Broseley in type. This find further emphasizes the complex relationships between the regional pottery and pipe production centres in the English Midlands, north-west and north Wales at this period.

The final site excavated largely by volunteers lay within the plot at present occupied by Rainford Branch Library. A late 17th- to early 18th-century pit containing local black glazed, yellow and mottled wares and clay pipes was succeeded by structural features associated with a 19th-century pipe workshop together with almost 10,000 fragments of its products. Later domestic occupation of the site produced a good range of late 19th- and early 20th-century pottery and glass.

On the Merseyside Archaeological Society's website this publication is listed as the first of two on Rainford's roots yet in the text there is no explanation of its relationship to the second volume which is not mentioned. It seems probable that it will tackle the results of the archaeological work carried out in the late 1970s and early 1980s, but this is not stated. Indeed, the account of those earlier excavations in the introductory chapter is rather garbled and, in places incorrect. The paragraph dealing with the Tennis Courts site begins 'In the following year waste pottery was discovered in a hedge bank ...'. The previous paragraph has no year to be followed and the pottery in the hedge was discovered in May 1977 over two years before the work in the Tennis Courts was carried out. The photograph of 'Excavations underway at the Tennis Court site behind Rainford Church in 1979/80' shows the open contractor's trench being searched for pottery waste by volunteers and not one of the two phases of archaeological excavation on the site. The text of this group of paragraphs appears to depend on an unpublished 1997 report held by Liverpool Museum. It is difficult to see why this document was used in preference to the excavators' reports which contain first-hand accounts of the work and the correct chronology. These reports are also held in the archives at Liverpool Museum. If the second volume does deal with these earlier excavations it is hoped that these inaccuracies will be corrected.

A possible criticism of much of the volume is a lack of synthesis both in detail and overall. For example, in her introduction to Chapter 4 – on the 32 Rainford wills and inventories most of which are not potters – Elizabeth Stewart notes their potential 'to place the material culture of the industries and lifestyles of individuals into a context'. Yet, there is no discussion of the social and economic implications of this data or any attempt to relate it to the implied material culture. This lack is even more acute in Appendix 1 which provides details of almost 600 potters from Rainford and 18 neighbouring townships between 1504 and

1880. The location map in the introductory chapter has only five of the townships on it, so only a local reader would be able to assess the geography of the industry and Rainford's place in it. There is no attempt to use this information in a wider discussion of the evolution of the pottery industry in the whole region. The presence of documentary source information in three different places with no wider synthesis adds to the parochial flavour of the whole publication.

This rather disjointed impression is reinforced by the excavation reports which are presented as separate entities – which they are of course – but with no text to link them together or discuss their combined implications. Nevertheless, the reports themselves are of a high quality. They are fully documented, well-illustrated with an intelligent use of colour photographs to show details of ceramic bodies and decorative detail. The account of No. 87 Church Road includes an excellent and far-reaching discussion of Cistercian ware and the significance of the Rainford finds by Jeff Speakman. It also has an extended essay by Robert Philpott entitled 'the development of rural ceramics industry in Rainford' which provides a coherent overview of the history of local pottery making, marketing, distribution and its interaction with the hinterland. It concludes with a discussion of the archaeological evidence for the regional distribution of two Rainford type fossils - the faceted tygs and the late 17th-century clay tobacco pipes. It is difficult to understand why the clay pipe data from No

87 Church Road is not included with the excavation report but tacked on as an appendix at the end of the whole work.

The title of the volume *The pottery and clay tobacco pipe industries of Rainford* implies a definitive overview of the subject which is only partially realized. For example, the clay pipe reports are excellent in themselves with some very interesting individual finds but they do not lead to any broader discussion of the Rainford industry which, arguably, is of greater regional and international significance than the contemporary potteries. On the other hand, Philpott's essay does provide the first significant overview of the ceramic industry. As the volume has no final chapter it is difficult to see why this important discussion was not used to round off the whole volume.

Despite these reservations the volume is essential reading for any archaeologist or ceramicist working in north-west England, north Wales, the Isle of Man and northern and eastern Ireland. While much of the documentary information it contains has not been used directly in the text it provides a rich source of information for future research into the regional pottery industry and its socio-economic base. The excavation report on No. 87 Church Road represents an exciting new development in local ceramic studies and provides a solid springboard for future research.

*Peter Davey*

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