

# The Exeter Inn and the potters of Litchdon Street, Barnstaple: north Devon pottery in the 16th Century

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*This paper presents the discovery and excavation of a 16th-century pottery production site at the Exeter Inn, Litchdon Street, Barnstaple, and the analysis of this material, which represents a major step forward in our understanding of the products and working practices of the north Devon potteries, prior to their development as a major industry in the 17th century. The artefact assemblage consists of over 50,000 sherds of pottery as well as a considerable volume of ridge and floor tile, recovered from a complex series of very large intercutting pits, broadly divisible into earlier 16th-century and later 16th-century features. Analysis of the material has identified changing trends in the scale of production, the types of pottery produced, the clay used, and the level of clay processing undertaken. No kilns were located during the work, but analysis of fragments of kiln structure and slate separators has highlighted the potential of this material for exploring how pottery was fired and stacked. The assemblage included a small number of inlaid floor tiles very similar to examples in several west Somerset churches, re-dating those tiles to the late 15th or early 16th century. Lastly, the small number of stamped or scored sherds points to apotropaic practices with distinct religious overtones.*

## Introduction

In the winter of 2010–11 South West Archaeology Ltd (SWARCH) undertook a routine archaeological evaluation in the backplot of a former public house, the Exeter Inn, in Litchdon Street, Barnstaple, Devon. The archaeological potential of the site was obvious from the outset but the evaluation exceeded all expectation and a series of very large pits containing 16th-century pottery wasters, tile, kiln furniture and kiln fabric were uncovered. Up to this point, this period of ceramic production in north Devon had been poorly understood, with only a handful of sites in Barnstaple producing a small amount of identifiable kiln waste. A community excavation was undertaken in October and November 2011 in collaboration with the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon (MBND) and the North Devon Archaeological Society (NDAS); further monitoring prior to the actual development took place in 2015. This work recovered over a metric ton of pottery and associated waste, which has now been brought to publication (Morris 2017). This article summarises the main findings of this work, incorporating research by John Allan (on the pottery), David Dawson and Oliver Kent (on the kiln structure),

John Allan and Cynthia Cramp (on the floor tiles) and Imogen Wood (petrological study). A full report has been published in the *Proceedings of the Devon Archaeological Society* (Morris 2017).

## Historical background

Litchdon (*Lycheton*) Street was a medieval suburb of Barnstaple (first documented 1329) and follows the line of the original road leading south from the Barbican towards Newport and Bishops Tawton. Humble in appearance and much altered, the roof timbers of the Exeter Inn indicate that it is one of the earliest surviving buildings on the street: a three-cell cross-passage house erected in AD 1602 (Moir 2012). Barnstaple, together with Bideford and Great Torrington, was a notable centre of pottery production in the medieval and post-medieval period (Fig 1). North Devon medieval coarsewares were distributed across much of north and west Devon, and the highly diagnostic post-medieval North Devon Gravel-tempered and Calcareous wares are found on sites throughout Devon and Cornwall, as well as Somerset, Bristol, south Wales, southern Ireland and North America. The most distinctive products, the

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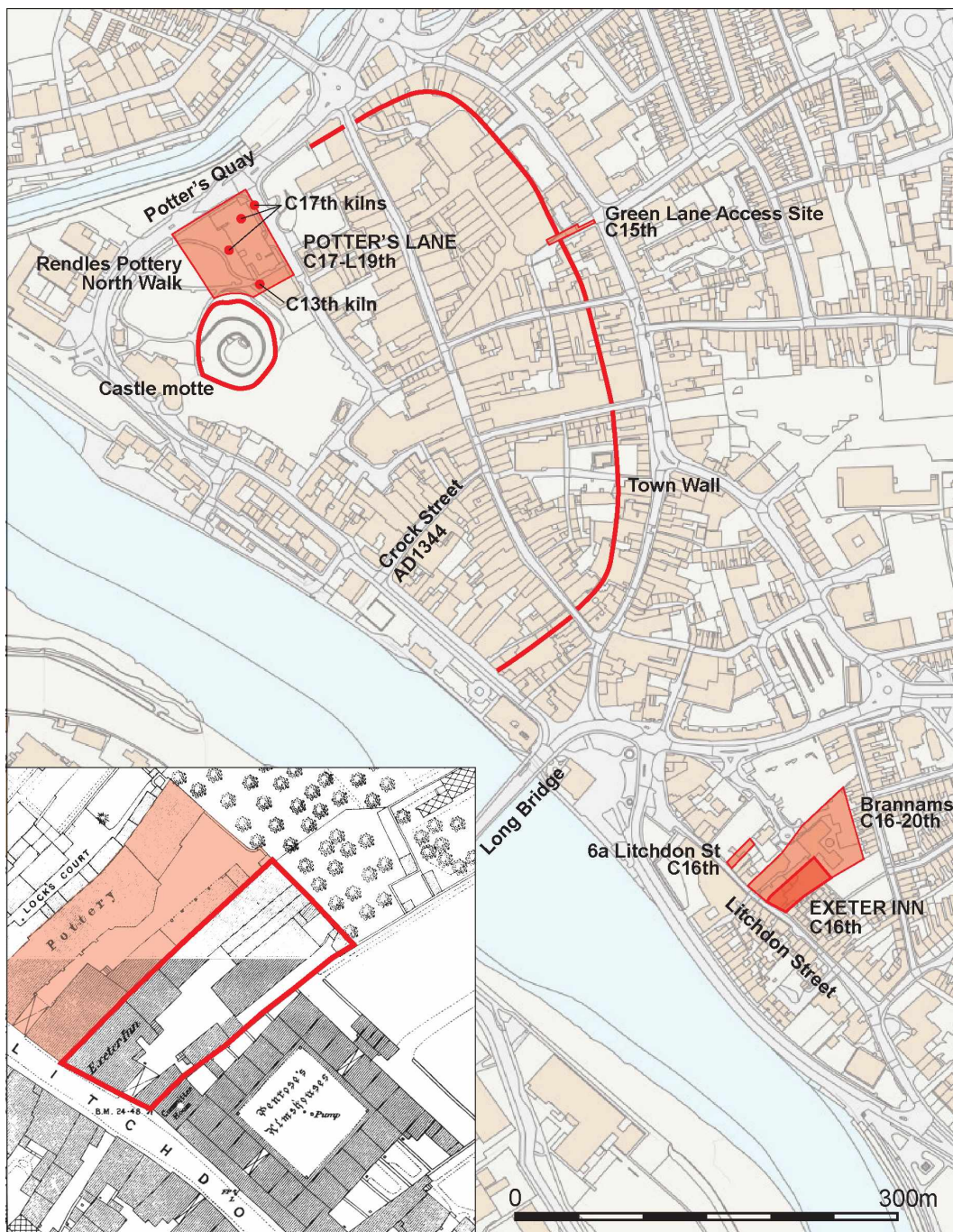


Figure 1. Location map showing the Exeter Inn site in relation to the known pottery sites in Barnstaple, with inset from the 1889 1:500 scale OS map of the town.  
Image: After Morris 2018 fig 1

highly decorative sgraffito wares, are the ones with the widest distribution. One medieval kiln and three 17th-century kilns were excavated in the 1980s on Potters Lane in Barnstaple, and while these sites have yet to be brought to publication, this material is relatively well understood and dated. The importance of the Exeter Inn material lies in the fact it post-dates the medieval phase and pre-dates the post-medieval flowering of the north Devon potters, literally a missing link in the ceramic development of the region.

Brannams Pottery, located immediately to the

north of the Exeter Inn, was a notable local business and art pottery. Thomas Brannam bought the pottery from the family of his former employer in *c* 1835 and there is documentary evidence for potting on Litchdon Street that goes back to the very late 16th century. Grant (2005, 58) identifies Harry Gribble as one of the early Litchdon potters, and other potters ‘probably working at Litchdon’ include Humphrey Peirse (d. 1615), and Samuel and John Warman (the latter married Elizabeth Gribble in 1621). George Wilkey (b 1598), the ‘potter of Litchdon’, married into the

Budd family, who were documented as potters in the 1550s (Grant 2005, 58–9). However, there is no firm documentary evidence for potting on Litchdon Street prior to c 1600.

## Methodology

A full statement on the methodology employed can be found in the full published report (Morris 2017). As noted above, there were three phases of fieldwork at the Exeter Inn, starting with the three evaluation trenches in 2010/11, followed by a community excavation

in 2011 and further archaeological monitoring by SWARCH in 2015. Together, the three interventions produced c 50,000 sherds of pottery as well as ridge tile, floor tile and fired clay from the structure of a kiln(s). True wasters (in the sense of over-fired and deformed pottery) were relatively rare, and the bulk of the ceramic assemblage consisted of vessels that had failed during firing and had been discarded. Due to the sheer volume of material recovered, specialists were consulted and a selection strategy was agreed: undiagnostic body sherds would be counted, weighed and discarded to bring the assemblage down



**Figure 2.** Site plan showing the location and extent of the investigated features. Image: after Morris 2018 fig 5



to manageable proportions. Eventually a retained sample of *c* 7500 sherds of diagnostic pottery was achieved. Several boxes of undiagnostic material were retained for future destructive chemical analysis, and reference boxes created for museums in the South West and further afield. Due to the subsequent use and truncation of the site, later material was largely absent, and is not considered here.

### Site stratigraphy

The stratigraphy of the Exeter Inn site is complex and our understanding of the site is necessarily tentative because of the way it was excavated (Fig 2). A full account of the archaeology can be found in the site archive and the two stratigraphic reports (Laing-Trengove and Morris 2015; Morris and Webb 2017). The archaeology of the site is notable for a number of reasons. Firstly, the phasing: there are clear 16th-century and 19th-century phases, but earlier and intervening periods are largely absent. Secondly, the size, extent and complexity of the 16th-century features, comprising at least six very large intercutting pits, 3–4m across and up to 2m deep, and numerous smaller or shallower pits, concentrated in a linear band crossing the eastern part of the site approximately east to west (Figs 3–4). Lastly, the fills of the (stratigraphically) latest features were markedly different to the earlier ones. The fills of the

earlier pits were more heterogeneous and domestic in character, with more and different earthy fills as well as a fair amount of animal bone. The later pits contained a much higher proportion of kiln waste, and this difference perhaps reflects an increasing scale or intensity of production.

The sequence excavated during the community excavation produced the most meaningful results, as a larger area (4×5m) was exposed and features were sampled most extensively. Within this trench a series of intercutting pits were excavated. The earliest, pit [421] produced 1419 sherds (20.797kg, avg. 14.65g per sherd) of pottery, 143 fragments (9.059kg) of ridge tile and 39 fragments (4.443kg) of floor tile. This was cut by pit [426], which produced 20,671 sherds (321.4kg, avg. 15.5g per sherd) of pottery, 1945 fragments (125.48kg) of ridge tile, 389 fragments (46.28kg) of floor tile, and 377 fragments (13.54kg) of heat-affected slate. Finally, pit [426] was cut by another large pit [422], which contained a single massive dump of material almost entirely composed of heat-affected slate, pottery and fragments of kiln structure, within which some distinct lenses could be discerned; this gave the fills of this pit a semi-industrial character. It produced 11,682 sherds (337.59kg, avg. 28.9g per sherd) of pottery, 560 fragments (32.9kg) of ridge tile, 169 fragments (25.89kg) of floor tile and 375 fragments (44.51kg) of heat-affected slate.



Figure 3. The north-west facing section of Trench 2 (scales 2m). Image: After Morris 2018 fig 9





**Figure 4.** South-east facing section of pit [426], cut by pit [422] to the left (scales 2m).  
Image: After Morris 2018 fig 6

## The Pottery

The material from the three interventions was processed, quantified and the undiagnostic material was recorded and then discarded (Table 1). The pottery falls into three main fabric groups: the North Devon Medieval coarsewares (NDMC) used *c* 1050–1450, and the North Devon Gravel-tempered (NDGT) and North Devon Calcareous wares (NDCal) in use from *c* 1500–1800; the medieval coarsewares were

generally residual (for definitions see Allan 1984; Allan *et al* 2005).

During the processing of the pottery it became clear that, despite the volume of material recovered, relatively few forms were represented. Detailed consideration of the material can be found in the accompanying publication in the *Proceedings of the Devon Archaeological Society* (Allan and Morris 2017), but based on the material from the Exeter Inn, and with reference to better-preserved examples from

**Table 1.** Quantification of the assemblage by count and weight (in kg)

Material	Discarded (sherd count)	Discarded weight (kg)	Retained (sherd count)	Retained weight (kg)
Pottery – NDMC	–	–	17	0.207
Pottery – NDGT	18,288	323.160	4149	144.606
Pottery – NDCal	20,361	342.494	3342	103.558
Pottery – Imports	–	–	13	0.135
Ridge Tile	3753	249.200	144	25.619
Floor Tile	571	45.171	236	58.490
<i>Total Ceramics</i>	42,973	960.025	7901	332.615
Kiln Structure	(tiny fragments)	12.46	465	31.012
Roof Slate	1165	58.314	122	24.751

**Table 2.** Type series of north Devon pottery forms from the Exeter Inn site

Type	Form	Description
Type 2	Jugs	NDCal, glazed externally, with exceptions; Types 2J defined by its applied decoration, over which iron oxide is sometimes applied, giving a black glaze (NDGT); Types 2P and 2S with internal glaze, 2P with gravel-tempered handle; Type 2R uncertain whether a jug or a handled jar.
Type 3	Bowls	NDGT, types 3K, 3L and 3N unglazed – at least towards the rim; Types 3P, 3R with glaze within the bowl, not extending onto rim; Type 3K with characteristic groove in rim top (?minor variant of 3M?); Type 3L very large type with reinforcing strip; Type 3M with thin glaze on lower half of interior; Type 3Q the most common type with two characteristic throwing ridges on the interior, below the rim.
Type 6	Chafing Dishes	NDCal, represented by a single illustrated fragment of a pierced bowl; insufficient to represent in type series.
Type 10	Baluster Jars	NDCal, unglazed externally, glazed internally, the shallow horizontal groove on the shoulder a typical feature.
Type 11	Large Storage Jars	NDGT with internal glaze; Type 11C with applied strip at neck.
Type 12	Cups	All NDCal, glazed internally and externally, all except 12G plain mid-green over the body; Type 12E with applied white clay bosses; Type 12F, 12H two-handled; Type 12F and 12 green-glazed both sides, 12G with internal yellow-glazed slip and external copper-green glaze over slip; Type 12G fragments of lobed cups.
Type 13	Rectangular Dripping Dish	NDGT with internal glaze; one is pierced half way up the wall.
Type 14	Globular Jars	NDCal with internal glaze. 14B with pronounced internal lidseating, conceivably a form of cucurbit but there are probably too many examples in the assemblage to be explained by this specialist function.
Type 15	Cisterns	NDCal with internal glaze.
Type 18	Shallow Pans	NDGT with internal glaze.
Type 21	Standing Costrels	NDCal with external glaze; Type 21A with pair of pierced lugs on shoulder; Type 21B with handles at the neck.
Type 24	Small, very shallow Pans/Trays	NDCal, both surfaced glazed, candle or plant pot holder? (?different from Type 18).
Type 25	Unknown	Small jug or bottle? NDCal with trace of internal glaze.
Type 26	Unknown	Small condiment dishes? NDCal, glazed both sides.

elsewhere, a revised type series has been drawn up that builds on earlier versions for North Devon ware (Allan *et al* 2005, 192–3; Fig 5). It should be noted that the kiln waste included occasional diagnostic sherds from other vessels; for example, there are a number of skillets and vessels with tripod feet present, but not enough to reconstruct forms with any confidence and so these have been excluded from the revised type

series. The nomenclature follows the MPRG *Guide to the Classification of Forms* (1998); the typology is based on Allan 1984, fig 63.

As noted, the overwhelming majority of the pottery recovered was clearly derived from a production context, with some over-fired and deformed examples, failed glazes and examples where the glaze had run over the edges of broken sherds. The small amount of

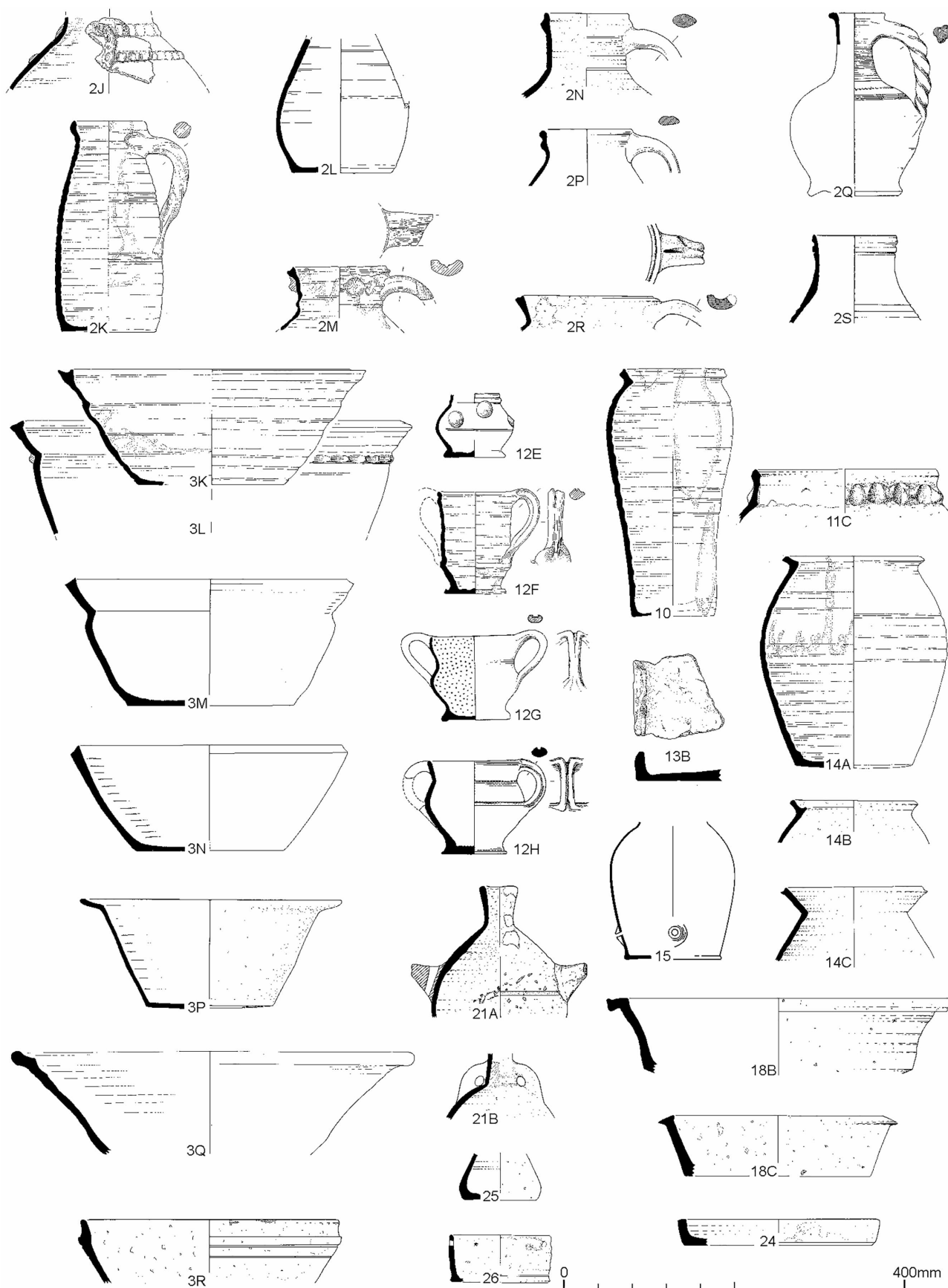


Figure 5. Type series for 16th century North Devon pottery. Image: Drawn by N Griffiths, T Hooper, L Blampied and J Allan) (after Morris and Allan 2018 fig 11)



imported pottery, and the presence of animal bone in most of the earlier contexts, indicate some domestic household material also found its way into these pits.

As Table 1 indicates, roughly equal quantities of the two main fabric groups were present by weight, the slightly larger number of NDCal sherds accounted for by the fact average sherd weight was lower. As the petrographic analysis makes clear (below), it is highly likely the Litchdon Street potters were exploiting the Fremington clays, and mixed it with fine gravel and/or calcareous material. However, the clays of an early NDCal sample appeared to be derived from an estuarine source, and thus may have been dug on site.

Comparing the output of the Exeter Inn kiln to those of east Devon/south Somerset (Hemyock and Donyatt) it is apparent they occupied different positions in the marketplace. The Hemyock material is dominated by decorated jugs (63% by EVE), which also form a high proportion of the wares from Donyatt (23% by EVE) (Allan *et al* 2018; Coleman-Smith and Pearson 1988). By way of contrast, in the Exeter Inn assemblage jugs make up only 10% of the material (Allan and Morris 2017), with an emphasis on jars and bowls.

## Dating

As discussed, the stratigraphy of the site was deep and complex with numerous intercutting pits, many of which contained broadly similar fills. However, the pottery indicates that these features can be crudely divided into *early 16th-century features* and *late 16th-century features*. The reality, of course, will be far more complex, but the broad patterns appear fairly clear. In terms of dating, the absence of clay tobacco pipe fragments and north Devon sgraffito products indicates the material dates to a period before *c* 1600–20, while the presence of certain imported wares (Beauvais sgraffito, Cologne and Frechen stoneware) point to a date in the 16th century. The latest features contained numerous Type 10 baluster jars, a form common in the early 17th century, as well as sherds of the Type 11C heavy storage jars, commonly found in 17th- and 18th-century contexts across north Devon and beyond; these features also contained the bulk of the kiln furniture and kiln fabric recovered. The dating evidence for the early features on the site is less conclusive. Some of the more distinctive forms appear to be paralleled in early 16th-century contexts elsewhere, and the presence of cups and bowls would point to a date *c* 1500. However, there is a general lack of comparable assemblages and it is possible, given the strongly medieval appearance of some of the material (e.g. broad strap handles), that some may date to the late 15th century or perhaps slightly earlier.

## Changing traditions

The broad division into *early* and *late* features allows trends to be identified through the changing

composition of the assemblage. Medieval-looking simple flat strap handles in NDCal, some with slashed decoration, and the barley-twist handles are common to the early features, but are not present in the late features. A relatively high proportion of handles in late contexts are gravel-tempered, even where the body of the vessel is NDCal, and this is a common characteristic of north Devon wares produced after *c* 1600. The Type 14C globular jars typical of the early features are replaced by the Type 10 baluster jars and Type 11C heavy storage jars in the later features. Finally, bowl rims in the early groups tend to have thin and sharply angular rims (Types 3K-3N); in the late features they are almost entirely superseded by the much heavier Type 3Q bowls.

## Distribution

The publication of a series of major 15th- and 16th-century assemblages around the Bristol Channel (Cleeve Abbey, Bridgwater, Bristol, Acton Court, Penhow and Carmarthen; see Allan 1997; Allan forthcoming; Good 1987; Vince and England 2004; Wrathmell 2016; O'Mahoney 1998) demonstrates that north Devon wares made up less than 3% of the pottery in circulation, in stark contrast to its widespread distribution in the 17th and 18th century. During the 15th and 16th century it is the west Somerset pottery industry that appears as the major supplier to the Bristol area and south Wales.

## Folklore

A number of sherds from the assemblage feature a large and carefully incised 'M' located on the shoulder of large closed vessels, probably jugs. These are usually interpreted as apotropaic marks invoking the protection of the Virgin Mary, which are relatively common feature of late medieval and early post-medieval buildings and objects (churches but also houses and outbuildings, on cast metal skillets and cauldrons, see Easton 1999; Blaylock 2000, plate 8; Green 2015, fig 12.5). It is assumed they were to provide some protection against witchcraft or less specific forms of danger.

Another notable feature of the assemblage is the incidence of stamped sherds (see Fig 6). While these could be interpreted simply as ornaments or maker's marks, they are rare and occur in a variety of locations, including the inside and outside of rims, on the body, basal angle and base. Some of the stamps, notably the wheel pattern, are similar to marks used on early clay pipes. Recent work on decorative motifs employed on Cistercian wares (Spavold 2009) argued these were overtly Catholic symbols that ceased to be used after AD 1547–50, and direct analogies can be drawn between the stamps used at the Exeter Inn and those listed by Spavold (e.g. Stamp S2 *the wheel* with Spavold's type 1 *Greek Cross*). If such an





Figure 6. Pottery stamps. Scale 1:1. Image: After Morris and Allan 2018 fig 21

analogy is justified, it puts an interesting spin on the interpretation of early clay pipe stamps.

### Floor and Ridge Tiles

The tile from the site has been studied in detail by Allan and Cramp (2017). Fragments of 21 decorated finished floor tiles were recovered during the excavation, but the discovery of these tiles in a dated kiln assemblage is highly significant. There are no clear Devon parallels, but two tiles bearing a

heraldic design can be matched to designs from Cleve Abbey and St Decuman's Church in Watchet, both in Somerset: (Ward-Perkins 1941; Harcourt 2000, 58–9, designs 117, 124; Lowe 2003, 52, designs 489 and 491). Two others come from a 16-tile design whose broad circular wreath is decorated with a central line punctuated by pellets with cinquefoils and arcading (Harcourt 2000, 56, designs 86–8; Lowe 2003, 102, designs 362–3). The only other place in north Devon with similar material is the former priory church at Pilton, Barnstaple. The 16-tile patterns recovered from

the Exeter Inn are currently the most complex and ambitious compositions known from Devon. Design matches between the fragments from the Exeter Inn and the churches of West Somerset could point to the movement of tiles or tile stamps, perhaps carried by itinerant tilers. However, the fabrics are dissimilar and the tiles at Cleeve had plain backs, lacking the keyed scoops of the Exeter Inn examples. This would appear to indicate that it was the tile stamps that moved, not the tiles themselves and, presumably, not the tilers either. Based on the assumed date of the heraldic designs the Somerset examples have been dated to the 13th–14th century, but the presence of these tiles at the Exeter Inn would strongly suggest that they are, in fact, all late 15th/early 16th century in date.

Large plain unglazed tiles in a NDGT fabric were also recovered from the site. The backs were stabbed with a long thin object, either a knife or a nail, or provided with deep keying scoops. Two examples had been scored to about 2/3 their depth at 45° and then snapped to produce triangular tiles; this would suggest they were floor tiles rather than oven tiles, as these tiles had been prepared to fit the edges of a pavement that had been laid at 45° to the walls of the room.

Ridge tile fragments made up a substantial proportion of the ceramics (up to 25% by weight) from each pit. Two fragments of probable finial were identified, and two main forms were represented: ridges with quite high knife-stabbed peaks in the medieval tradition, and those with a rolled ridge. The former are unremarkable but the latter are unusual, although there is at least one local parallel in the early 16th-century Valiant Soldier kiln in Exeter (Allan 1984, 242–6).

## Petrology

The detailed results of the petrological analysis by Wood can be found in the publication report (Wood 2017). The main findings of the work relate to the identification of a clay source, and variations in the preparation of the clays prior to potting. The analysis determined that, despite the apparent homogeneity of the calcareous inclusions in NDCal wares, and contrary to some previous opinions, the crushed shell that appears in late NDCal wares appears to be a temper that had been added to the same non-calcareous base clay used for NDGT wares, rather than material found naturally in estuarine clay. With one exception, this base clay was probably *not* derived from local alluvial deposits and it appears most likely that the clay was sourced from the Fremington clay pits used by later north Devon potters. This clay was also used for the floor tiles and the kiln structure fragments. The exception, clay used for the early NDCal sample, could be from alluvial deposits on the site, suggesting the early pits were for clay extraction. Broadly speaking, vessels in NDGT and NDCal fabrics first appear in the late 15th century and *c* 1500

respectively, and thus the use of different clays for NDGT and NDCal wares in the early features reflects a period of transition in clay sourcing strategies. A second strand of evidence supports the suggestion that the Litchdon Street potters were just starting to exploit a new clay source. The petrological analysis indicates that the clays used in the early wares were subject to more extensive processing than the late wares, yet the Fremington clays were famous for requiring minimal processing. This could readily be explained by spatial variation in the clays initially investigated, but at the Brannam pit at Fremington, exploited by the 19th-century industry in the town, the pure potter's clay was capped by up to 2m of mixed deposits that would have required extensive processing. It is quite possible that the variation in the level of processing apparent in the Exeter Inn material marks the point at which deposits of the pure potter's clay were discovered.

## Kiln Technology

A full report on the kiln structure has been published by Dawson and Kent (2017). While a kiln was not identified at the Exeter Inn, the recovery of fragments of kiln structure, along with roof slate and ridge tile used as separators, allows some conclusions to be drawn about the character of the kiln and firing practices and highlights the importance of retaining this material on production sites.

The pottery was once-fired to glaze and there is no evidence that the pottery was fired inside saggars, or for the use of clay blocks such as those used to construct the substructure of the kilns at Potters Lane in Barnstaple (Lovatt 1988). Similarly, there is no evidence for the number or position of the fireboxes. However, the fragments of kiln material recovered indicate that the kiln was a simple clay-built open-topped updraft kiln with a ware chamber 1.22–1.34m across. The impressions of fingers and thumbs, and trowel marks, betray the efforts of the potters to shape and smooth the surfaces. The bulk of this material came from late contexts.

The small quantity of thrown kiln furniture recovered consists of cylindrical and bellied props. The props were made from an extremely coarse gritty fabric, thrown with a pronounced raised centre to the base. Some were perforated, and where the clay had been pushed in, the dottle (the clay residue) was left where it fell in the bottom. There are three main sizes (90mm, 130–150mm and 180–190mm in diameter); the maximum height that could be determined was >120mm. The bulk of the separators used in the kiln were reused roof slates. Some clearly showed evidence of being used to bridge voids as they were warped and bowed from intense heat and this would suggest they were used as the loose floor of the firing chamber.

Lastly, the petrological analysis indicated that all but one of the pottery and other samples had an optically-inactive clay matrix, indicating firing



temperatures in excess of 800–850°C. This is to be expected of pottery of this date. However, the early NDCal sample had an optically-active clay matrix, indicating a firing temperature below 800–850°C. It is unclear at this stage whether this is a significant observation, or once again points to the early phase as a threshold period.

## Discussion

The archaeology of the site was complex and dominated by very large pits. The early pits may have been dug to obtain potting clay, and they were certainly backfilled with material derived from pottery production. Clay extraction does not, however, explain why the later pits cut across one another in such a complex fashion. The most plausible explanation for the later features is that they were originally quarry pits for building in cob (mass earth walling), a material widely used in Devon for houses, outbuildings and freestanding walls.

No kilns were identified during the interventions here, but the sheer quantity of waste material and the presence of kiln structure in the pits, indicates that production must have occurred nearby. The work has demonstrated the value of recovering and studying structural fragments for the evidence this can provide on kiln stacking and firing.

The changing composition of the pottery assemblage over time follows the transition from a late medieval tradition to a recognizably post-medieval one, and this is mirrored by the changing character of the pit fills, the clays used, and the processing techniques employed. The early pits contained a lot of other material and domestic waste whereas the fills of the demonstrably late pits were dominated by wasters, kiln furniture and kiln CBM. This would imply a shift in the scale of production from household to workshop. This change appears to have been accompanied by the widespread adoption of Fremington clay, and the clay processing evidence would suggest the pure potting clays were located during this period. All of these factors will have played a role, and were perhaps a necessary precursor to, the expansion of the industry in the 17th century.

The proximity of the 19th-century Brannam pottery to the Exeter Inn can be no coincidence, making Brannams the heir to a potting tradition that spanned 500+ years. Brannams moved to a new site in 1993, and finally closed its doors in 2005.

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## Résumé

Cet article présente la découverte et la fouille d'un site de production de céramique du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle à Exeter Inn, Litchdon Street, Barnstaple, ainsi que l'analyse de ce matériau, qui constitue un progrès majeur dans la compréhension des produits et des pratiques de travail des poteries du nord du Devon, avant qu'elles ne deviennent une industrie majeure au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Le mobilier comprend plus de 50 000 tessons de céramique, ainsi qu'un volume considérable de tuiles de faîtage et carreaux de pavement, récupérés dans une série complexe de très grandes fosses enchevêtrées, largement datables du début du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle et de la fin XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle. L'analyse du mobilier a mis en évidence des modifications de l'échelle de production, les types de poterie produits, l'argile utilisée et le niveau de traitement de l'argile entrepris. Aucun four n'a été localisé pendant les fouilles, mais l'analyse de fragments de structure de four et de séparateurs en ardoise a mis en évidence le potentiel de ce matériau pour examiner comment la poterie a été cuite et empilée. L'assemblage comprenait un petit nombre de carreaux de pavement incrustés très similaires à ceux de plusieurs églises de l'ouest du Somerset, dont la datation a été corrigé vers la fin du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle ou du début du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle. Enfin, le petit nombre de tessons estampés ou incisés est une indication de pratiques apotropaiques aux nuances religieuses particulières.



## Zusammenfassung

Dieser Beitrag beschreibt die Entdeckung und Ausgrabung einer Töpferwerkstatt des 16. Jahrhunderts im Exeter Inn, Litchdon Street, Barnstaple, sowie die Analyse dieses Materials, die einen großen Fortschritt unseres Verständnisses der Produkte und Arbeitspraktiken der Töpfereien in Nord-Devon darstellt, bevor sie sich im 17. Jahrhundert zu einer bedeutenden Industrie entwickelten. Das Material umfasst über 50.000 Keramikscherben sowie ein beträchtliches Volumen von First- und Bodenfliesen, die aus einer komplexen Abfolge von sehr großen Gruben geborgen wurden, die weitgehend in Befunde des frühen und späteren 16. Jahrhunderts unterteilt werden können. Anhand der Analyse des Materials konnten wechselnde Trends in Bezug auf den Produktionsumfang, die Art der hergestellten Keramik, den verwendeten Ton und den Grad der Tonvorbereitung ermittelt werden. Während der Untersuchung wurden keine Öfen gefunden, aber die Analyse von Ofenbruchstücken und Schieferstützen hat das Potenzial dieses Materials für die Erforschung der Art und Weise, wie Keramik gebrannt und gestapelt wurde, aufgezeigt. Das Material umfasst auch eine kleine Anzahl von mit Einlagen versehenen Bodenfliesen, die gute Vergleiche in mehreren Kirchen in West-Somerset haben und für diese Fliesen eine Neudatierung auf das späte 15. oder frühe 16. Jahrhundert zulassen. Einige gestempelte oder markierte Scherben lassen sich mit apotropäischen Praktiken mit deutlich religiösen Anklängen in Verbindung bringen.

