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**Some Evidence of Two Types of Pottery Manufactured in Bristol in the Early 18th-century**

by K. J. Barton
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Some evidence for Two Types of Pottery manufactured in Bristol in the early 18th century

By KENNETH JAMES BARTON

Summary

THIS paper sets out to identify two wares as being of Bristol manufacture. These are in the first case salt glaze wares and in the second, yellow slip wares. A date range of c. 1700–1750, is suggested for these products.

The Salt Glaze Wares (Fig. 1)

Mr K. Marochan and Mr K. Reed who have for many years diligently garnered material from building sites in Bristol visited such a site at Ship Lane, Cathay, Bristol. Here they saw that an old sand pit had at some time been filled with rubbish that contained a large quantity of pottery, some of which was kiln waste. This pottery deposit ranged in date through the 17th century and well into the 18th; it was not a stratified deposit, but lay mixed in sloping tip lines. The types represented were slip wares, lead and tin glaze wares, iron stained ‘tigerskin’ salt glaze, and fine white salt glaze wares. There was also a large group of kiln furniture. This kiln furniture falls into groups, a small collection of salt glazed fragments and a larger collection of tin-glazed fragments. Close examination of the salt glazed wares showed that (a) several vessels were wasters (b) the pastes of vessels and kiln furniture were similar (c) the vessels had characteristics similar to one another.

The assembled group of coarse salt glaze wares and the kiln furniture comprises six pieces of furniture and ninety-six fragments of ware, of which ninety-four are of one paste and eight fragments are wasters. There are two main types of vessel. (1) Tankard (and jugs) (2) globular vessels (jars and bottles).

1 The writer wishes to point out that the information offered in the first part of this paper is published by him at the invitation of these two gentlemen.
The paste varies in colour from blue grey to off-white, but the prominent colour is blue grey. The paste is very fine in texture without any inclusions or evidence of grain. However all the examples under discussion have small laminar air pockets. The small spaces are ‘eye’ shaped in section and their lines follow the throwing flow of the paste. They occur at infrequent intervals in the paste and in some cases there are only one or two examples to be seen in the samples available.

**Tankards.** The tankards are represented by pint and half-pint vessels. All the rim fragments have external grooves underneath. All handles are straps with a central groove and are fixed at their base with a cross wipe, under which the handle is returned into a scroll. All the base fragments have one form of decoration, which reads from the top: a double reed over a cord over a single reed over a cord. There are thirty-one fragments of this type of which two are wasters, fifteen are plain brown ‘tigerskin’ finish the rest are in a grey finish under a lustrous glaze.

**Half-pint Tankards.** Sixteen fragments, all the rim fragments of which have a thin external groove underneath. All the handles are cranked, fastened with a basal wipe and returned into a scroll. All decoration is in one form, a double reed over a plain cord. All but three fragments have a dark brown wash over a light brown wash under a thin glaze giving an almost matt finish. Three fragments have a light mottled ‘tigerskin’ finish under a full glaze. Three fragments have small impress duty stamps bearing a crown set over the letters G.R. within a circle. One vessel having a similar paste and glaze but having a slightly different reeding was found at St Nicholas’ Burial Ground, Crow Lane, Bristol, and is seen to have inclusions and kilning damage to the base making use as a drinking vessel impossible. (Fig. 1, no. 6.)

**Jugs.** The rims of two vessels with similar characteristics to those discussed above except that they have been thumbed out into a lip at one point.

**Globular Vessels.** Thirty-one fragments of which four are wasters. There are few definite characteristics of these vessels; the bases all have foot rings, the handles of the large ones are round in section save for a central groove and all have brown ‘tigerskin’ uppers and plain pale grey lowers. The glaze in each case is full and bright.

**Colour.** The colour of the vessel is determined by the concentration of an external wash of iron. This wash is broken in the process of glazing into a fine mosaic and it usually gives the finish known as ‘tigerskin’. In some cases several coats were applied to give a deeper and often coarser finish.
Illustrated Types (fig. 1)

1. Pint tankard in a blue grey paste with small laminar holes. Upper two-thirds of the outside of the vessel covered with a dark brown glazed ‘tigerskin’ finish. The footring is decorated with wet state turning in the form of two reeds over a plain cord one reed over a plain cord. The handle is represented by the springing and the basal fixing which is of standard design to these vessels.

2. Single strap handle oval in section, with a central groove. Covered with dark brown ‘tigerskin’ glaze.

3. Fragment from the rim of a half-pint tankard in a blue grey paste with small laminar gaps. Washed in iron with a ‘tigerskin’ finish in the top half only. The lower half is pale grey in colour. The upper springing of a cranked strap handle remains.

4. Fragment from the base of a half-pint tankard in a matt brown finish under a thin glaze. The footring is decorated with two reeds over a single cord.

5. Fragment of the upper half of a tankard in a brown ‘tigerskin’ glaze bearing the impress of a duty stamp, the letters G.R. surmounted by a crown, all set in a circle.

6. The fragments of a tankard in a brown ‘tigerskin’ glaze bearing the remains of the basal fixing of a handle. This is fixed with a double horizontal wipe and re-turned into a scroll. The footring is decorated with a single reed over a single cord. Under the base is a mass of inclusion and attached material that pierces and damages the base.

7. Fragment of the neck and shoulders of a globular vessel finished in a lustrous ‘tigerskin’ glaze. There is a thin iron wash within this vessel.

8. The fragment of the neck and shoulder of a globular vessel with a ‘tigerskin’ finish. The handle base is round in section and deeply indented at the base to marry with the body. This fixing is pulled into a strip which is also thumbed.

9. Fragment of the neck and handle of a bottle finished in ‘tigerskin’ glaze. The handle is round in section with an external thin groove.

10. The waster fragment of a small globular vessel in ‘tigerskin’ under a thin glaze.

11. Rim and shoulder fragment of a small globular vessel in a fine dark and very lustrous ‘tigerskin’ finish.

12. The base of a globular vessel with a plain glaze giving a grey finish. The footring is of plain round form.

13. The base of a small vessel that has severe kiln damage. Decorated with a thin iron wash outside only. Plain footring.

14. Three spacers in a pale grey paste all in the form of a flat ring. These spacers are all broken at one end, they were never joined in a complete circle and their final shape is not known. All the spacers bear marks showing that footring vessels and rims have been in contact with them. All the pieces are heavily charged with glaze.

15. Saggar. A small circular form, well used and coated several times with a thick, lustrous and yet opaque glaze. Several prop marks and several glazed over fractures indicate re-use. Small conical shaped holes are cut in the sides of the vessel. The bottom of this saggar is covered with broken fragments.

16. The portions of two rectangular saggers with egg-shaped vents, the whole heavily charged with opaque glaze. The paste is of standard form and the vessels have been used several times.

N.B.—the bases of several vessels show that square section props approximately 1 inch square were used.
Fig. 1. Salt glaze stoneware. (†)
Dating. The evidence for the date of these vessels is confined in the beginning at least to 1714 but could extend of course to 1820. However there is some evidence to suggest that this type belongs to the first quarter of the 18th century by the parallel vessel published by the writer in Chester.\footnote{Chester Arch. Journal, 44, pp. 19–28, fig. 2, no. 1.} This vessel belongs to a group closely dated to 1690–1710, and is so similar in character to the vessels discussed above that it must be a product of the Bristol kilns. There is evidence of Mary Orchard making salt glaze pottery in Temple Back after 1701\footnote{W. J. Poulteney, Old Bristol Potteries, pp. 299 ff.} and it is probably from this source that these fragments are derived.

This material is deposited in the City Museum, Bristol.

Decorated Yellow Slip Wares (fig. 2)

In the report on the excavations at the Back Hall,\footnote{Trans. RCAS, LXXIX, pp. 251–26.} Baldwin Street, Bristol, the writer suggests that the vessel illustrated in fig. 10, no. 4\footnote{See also here, fig. 2, no. 13.} was a product of the Bristol kilns. This remark was based upon personal observation only. Search for parallels to this vessel has revealed that a vessel of similar form and decoration was published by Rackham\footnote{Rackham and Reed, English Pottery (1925), fig. 40, pl. xxvi.} with the comment that it was not a Staffordshire product as it lacked the typical characteristics of that ware. Further research has shown that this ware has a very large distribution in the Bristol region, and although Staffordshire wares do occur in Bristol\footnote{One in this form. City Museum Bristol (no. G.300).} they are uncommon. This argument is not backed up by kiln waste material, although this has been observed by the writer in two places in Bristol. The first site was reconstruction work at Hotwells Road near the Library where the material appeared to have been tipped, and also on the site of a ramp being constructed into the City Engineer’s Yard at Redcliffe Wharf.\footnote{This is on the site of Thomas Franks’ Pottery, 1706.} These two cases occurred in 1957 and the writer being unaware of the problem at that time failed to collect examples.

This type is an earthenware, the paste of which is smooth without any inclusions. The colour of the paste is basically grey with variations between pink and white. The unglazed paste fires to an off-white finish. These paste characteristics are common to all the vessels under discussion.

The glaze is nearly always very thin, a fine glaze that has not run much, and does not accumulate at the bottom of the vessel. The underglaze colour is in all cases a pale chalk-yellow distinctly different
Fig. 2. Black decorated yellow slip ware. (1)
from the rich deep yellow of the Staffordshire wares. Thin glaze appears to be more common to the earlier wares than to the later wares in which it is much more lustrous.

The slip decoration has a black underglaze finish, but is in effect a dark red slip probably made from haematite. This decoration is mainly applied or trailed but some vessels are dipped; nos. 17 and 18 have been treated identically, in that they have been dipped and then the bases wiped off in precisely the same manner. The primary form of decoration is an applied black dot. These black dots are always slightly proud of the surface, and the thin glaze leaves them roughened. They frequently 'bleed' in the kiln and the colour particles run down the vessel for quite a distance. This appears to be a characteristic of the ware. This form of decoration is usually regular in shape as if applied from a mould or stencil. The dots are mainly applied to the upper parts of the body, around the rim. Nos. 3 and 12, under the outside of the rim, nos. 2, 10, 14 and 18, and around the lip of a lid, nos. 7 and 8, but they are sometimes found on the body of the vessel as in no. 2 or across the middle as in no. 5, and at the base in nos. 4 and 6. Except in one case these dots are a freestanding and individual form of decoration. However, in the case of no. 1 they have been surrounded with a roughly painted circle of slip, the only form of decoration on this vessel. Other forms of decoration are however common to these vessels; nos. 8, 9, 10 and 11 exhibit a form of decoration that is common to this type. This is a series of plain, lightly brushed lines across the belly of the vessel. In nos. 12, 13, 14 and 15 these lines have been laid thicker and then combed. In the case of no. 16 the decoration is slightly different in that the belly of the vessel has received a light brown wash over which has been trailed an irregular series of strips that have bled over the body of the vessel. The paste, glaze and form of this vessel assure its association with these forms.

A separate and distinct form of decoration is seen in the group nos. 17, 18, 19 and 20 in which the vessels have been dipped into the slip to give a black ground on which a white slip decoration has been developed. Although these decorative motifs are different from those discussed above, the dot motif remains and is seen in a line of white dots on a vessel bearing the standard form of dot decoration in no. 18; and in no. 20 this is seen in a group of dots in a circle of smaller dots. This white slip on black is not shown here as being combed, although examples are to be seen in the City Museum, Bristol. The use of trailed slip to date a vessel can be seen on no. 17 and is also seen in black on yellow on three vessels in the City Museum, Bristol.
The handles of these vessels are all standard in that all are elliptical in section. These handles all have modified cranks in that they are angular and not circular in profile. Another prominent feature is the basal fastening which is claw shaped in section, this is not to be seen on all the vessels.

The vessels fall into several groups; the first is the lidded posset pot of which nos. 8 and 9 are good examples. The prominent features are the deep collar, the high placed handles and the lid treatment which is seen to be standard as shown also in no. 7. There appear to be three forms of drinking mug of which nos. 4 and 5 are one form (although no. 5 is lipped into a jug, the shape is the same as 4). These two vessels are similar in form to the three vessels previously discussed. No. 1, another form, has a wide mouth on a narrow base and is the best example of this form. The predominant form is the one seen in full in no. 18; this is supported by the parallel fragments of nos. 2, 10, 14, 15 and 17. The two vessels nos. 12 and 16 and fragment no. 3 are of standard toilet vessel design. No. 17 which stands out as a unique form in this collection is called a honey pot by Rackham who illustrates a vessel which could be a parallel of this one.

The dating seems assured for we know that combing does not start much before 1675 and this gives a good lower date; no. 13 has already been provisionally dated to 1690–1710 by association. There are in the City Museum, Bristol, three fragments of the rims of vessels in this ware (the nearest parallel would be to the rim of no. 16 for all these fragments). The fragments all bear dates laid in black on yellow; the dates are 1708, 1712 and 173(4?) respectively and we see that no. 17 is dated to 1743. It is suggested therefore that a bracket of say 1680–1760 be given to the date of this ware, although it is probable that the end date could be considerably extended.

The distribution appears to have a local bias. The centre is suggested as being in Bristol as it is here that considerable quantities of the ware are found. Furthermore the distribution of complete vessels within 50 miles of Bristol would suggest by their concentration that they are a local product.

(Distribution Table overleaf)

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Table showing the distribution of available material

Complete Vessels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Museum</th>
<th>Marks</th>
<th>FIG. 2, no.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bristol</td>
<td>City Museum</td>
<td>(C.M.C.1574)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(G.1535)</td>
<td>not drawn</td>
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<td></td>
<td>City Art Gallery</td>
<td>(G.1378)</td>
<td>not drawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taunton</td>
<td>Castle Museum</td>
<td>(N.5900)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(T.M.4-4)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(T.M.4-5)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>(T.M.4-38)</td>
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<td>(T.M.4-3)</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>The Museum</td>
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<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>no number</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stroud</td>
<td>The Museum</td>
<td>(2483)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeovil</td>
<td>The Museum</td>
<td>no number</td>
<td>not illustrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>but as no. 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cirencester</td>
<td></td>
<td>one as no. 12 found during building operations at Dyer Court</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>now in private hands at Cheltenham.1</td>
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Fragments Illustrated

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<th>Marks</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>no number</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Castle Museum</td>
<td>(R.H.1.M.R.C.1951)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>no number</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiff</td>
<td>The National Museum of Wales</td>
<td>(92-17)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bristol</td>
<td>In the possession of the writer. From St Nicholas Burial Ground, Crow Lane</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fragments not Illustrated. The writer has many fragments of this ware in his possession. There are also many examples to be seen at the City Museum and at the City Art Gallery, Bristol. Examples are also in the possession of Mr K. Marochan and Mr K. Reed. They are also to be seen at Weston-super-Mare Museum, where some of the fragments come from Locking. One fragment in Axbridge Museum comes from the excavation of a mill leaet. The Chew Valley Lake excavations also produced fragments of this ware. No fragments of this ware are to be seen in the collection of excavated material in the Museum at Gloucester.

1 Information supplied by the Museum Assistant, Corinium Museum. The writer is indebted to the curators of all the above-mentioned Museums for their valuable help, and to the many others who have provided information. Mr Warhurst, Director, The City Museum, Bristol, has read this paper and given useful advice.