

THE PIPE YEAR BOOK

2003



Académie Internationale de la Pipe
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The Pipe Year Book 2003

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Front cover : Meerschaum pipe Bowl. Pipe offered by the Turkish sultan to King of Italy Victor Emmanuel II. - Altadis collection

Back cover : Salad bowl «to the smoker» end of the 18 th century. Earthenware of Nevers. - Bergerac Tobacco Museum collection

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THE OLDEST CLAY-PIPES' FACTORY IN GREAT BRITAIN

«IN 1432 COLUMBUS SAILED THE OCEAN BLUE». I learned this at school at a time when history teaching revolved round personalities and heroic deeds. With this momentous voyage he triggered the exploration and exploitation of a continent rich in resources, ... habits and ideas that would have lasting effects on not only the «Old World» but the whole world. Amongst these we find tobacco.

In October 1492 Columbus made his first landfall in the Bahamas. He was greeted with a bunch of dried leaves by the inhabitants. A few days later the native American custom of smoking tobacco was observed and duly recorded in the ships' log. From this time tobacco in small

quantities could have reached Europe in the hands of sailors and adventurers.

By the middle of the Sixteenth century it is recorded in several European countries. A great deal is written about its medicinal powers claimed by both native Americans and by Europeans. In Europe its early use was predominantly in unguents and hairs, smoking being adopted at a later date.

In his *Great Chronologie*; William Harrison, writes of the year 1573 :

«In these daies the taking-in of the Indian herbe called tobacco by an instrument formed like a little laden, whereby it passeth from the mouth into the hed and stomach, is gretlie taken-up and used in England, against Rewmes and other diseases ingenderd in the longes and inward partes and not without effect».

In these early years tobacco was also noted as a hunger suppressant.

In 1585 Giovanni Maria Bonardo records in his book on minerals entitled «*La Minera del mondo*».

«In America the Indians take the smoke of the plant nicotiana and

they use it by a pipe made of stone and they lessen their hunger and satisfy their thirst with it; they revive their spirits and fall into a pleasant sleep and they dream the most beautiful dreams which can be said or imagined».

Published in Mexico in 1591 Juan de Cardenas book, *Primera parte de los problemas y secretos maravillosos de las indias* ;

«Concerning picieto [tobacco] I will explain the most remarkable method of cure which, in the whole of medicine, can be imagined. This I have seen only the natives of this country do, from whom the negros and many Spanish and also women have taken it up. They take the plant and after drying and pulverising it, they enclose it in another leaf or small tube, and lighting it at one end, suck in the smoke at the other, in order to inhale it. They tell of the wonderful effects which follow the taking of this smoke... Soldiers, subject to privations, keep off cold, hunger and thirst by smoking, all the inhabitants of the hot countries of the Indies alleviate their discomforts by the smoke of this blessed and medicinal plant».

And in a later passage he continues :

«As to the instrument with which it should be smoked there is likewise some doubt, for some are accustomed to take it in small clay or silver pipes or those of hardwood. Others wrap the tobacco in a corn husk or in paper car in a tube of cane... The smoke taken in clay, silver or wooden pipes is stronger, because only the plant is smoked and no other thing outside it; whereas smoked in a leaf in paper or in a reed the smoke is weaker since it is not only the tobacco which is smoked but also the leaf or the reed in which it is contained».

Poets too extolled the virtues of the weed as in this example from 1641 accompanying a print entitled *Roaring Boys* ;

«Much meat doth gluttony produce
And makes a man a wine...
But he hees a temperate man indeed
That with a leaf can dine...
He needs no napkin for his hands
His fingers for to wipe...
He hath his kitchen in a box
His roast meat in a pipe».

Two species of tobacco were present in the Americas with discreet distributions. *Nicotiana Rustica* to the south of Mexico and throu-

ghout the Antilles, and Nicotiana Tabacum north of Mexico. Both species were present in England by 1573 arguing conclusively for at least two introductions.

English sailors under Hawkins in 1565 observed the natives of Florida taking smoke through a «cane and earthen cup» and recorded that the French, who had already established a colony there, also practised the smoking habit. It is unthinkable that members of Hawkins crew did not emulate this new habit and in fact introduce Rustica to these shores.

Drake is a likely candidate for the introduction of Tabacum on his return from the West Indies in 1573.

So why do all the history books credit Raleigh with the introduction of tobacco? Clearly he played some part.

In 1584 he obtained letters patent from the Queen to colonise new lands in America. An exploratory expedition claimed lands in North Carolina for the crown. In 1585 a second Raleigh sponsored Virginia expedition carried settlers who remained there for one year. Amongst these was Thomas

Harriot who on his return published a record of his personal observations entitled :

Briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia. In this he writes :

«They use to take the fume or smoke of tobacco by sucking it through pipes made of clay. We ourselves during the time we were there used to suck it after their manner; as also since our return».

Undoubtedly smoking was popularised by the Raleigh Harriot set for in the years following the Virginia expedition smoking for pleasure made rapid inroads in English society.

In 1598 Paul Hentzner a German visitor to England writes :

«The English have pipes on purpose made of clay into the farther end of which they put the herb, and putting fire to it draw, the smoke into their mouth».

Smoking soon attracted its critics including King James 1 who in 1604 published a vitriolic condemnation of tobacco smoking entitled Counter-blast against Tobacco.

«After denying that tobacco had any medicinal value he went on to say Have you not reason to be ashamed, and to forbear this filthy noveltie, so basely grounded, so foolishly received and so grossely mistaken in the right use thereof ? In your abuse thereof sinning against God ; harming yourselves both in persons and in goods, and raking also thereby the markes and notes of vanitie upon you ; and by the custome thereof making yourselves to be wondered at by all foraine civil nations, and by all strangers that come among you, to be scorned and condemned. A custome lothsome to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the braine; dangerous to the lungs and in the blacke stinking fume thereof nearest resembling the horrible stigmatic smoke of the pit that is bottomless Hell».

Although there is a large corpus of contemporary literature debating the pros and cons of the smoking habit it is not the purpose of this paper to quote exhaustively from these. Let another unknown poet have the last say :

Epitaph to an unknown tobacconist 1627.

Loe here I Lye roll'd up like the Indian weed,
My pipes I have pack'd up, for breath I need.
Man's breath's a vapour, he himself is grass ;
My breath but of a weed the vapour was.
When I shall turn to earth, good friends beware,
Lest it evaporate and infect the aire.

Pipes and Pipe making in England.

Although white Clay pipes have been recovered from archaeological deposits dating from the end of the sixteenth century they remain uncommon until the second quarter of the seventeenth century. Tobacco imports in the early years all came from regions under the control of Spain with whom England was at war until 1604. It was not until 1613 that these sources were supplemented by supplies from the Virginia colony. By 1619 the tobacco pipe makers of Westminster were granted charter of incorporation giving them a monopoly throughout the realm. That infringements of this monopoly were challenged is known from cases in Portsmouth Court Leet 1622 and Reading Borough Records

1623. On the other hand, at Bristol in 1619 Richard and Anne Berryman openly took John Wall as their apprentice. The original London Company seems to have foundered by 1627 and a second charter was granted in 1734 by which the petitioners undertook to burn only coals for firing their pipes and to pay £40 a year to an individual to instruct their members in the use of coals for this purpose. By the 1640s, pipe makers are recorded at numerous centres outside the city and the establishment of pipe makers guilds at York, c. 1650, Bristol, 1652 and Gateshead, 1675 indicates that what little control London pipe makers may once have exercised had by then expired.

Pipe Aston North Herefordshire

The parish of Aston in North Herefordshire was the home of a community of clay tobacco pipe makers from as early as 1630 to the middle of the eighteenth century. For this reason it has long been known locally as Pipe Aston. This was officially recognised in 1894 when the local name was given to the newly formed civil parish. More recently in 1999 as result archaeological work in the parish raising of the profile of this past industry new

road signs have been erected at the approaches to the village proudly stating Pipe Aston.

It is a rural parish of about fifteen houses, a number more or less stable since the beginning of the eighteenth century although data from fieldwalking and archaeological excavation indicates a slightly larger population in the seventeenth century.

Pipes are to be found all over the parish and it is unlikely that local people have never lost sight of the fact that they were made there ; however sometimes around 1930 a chance discovery of a tobacco pipe manufactory in Juniper Dingle, made by a timber contractor in the course of his work and reported to Alfred Watkins, brought this local knowledge to the wider audience.

Watkins visited the site and reported on his findings in the Journal of the Woolhope Club.

The site at Juniper Dingle was relocated by this author in the 1970 s, subsequently sampled by limited excavation in 1992 and the results published in 1996 (Peacey 1996, 270-76). The period of manufacture is tentatively dated to c. 1660-1690.

Whilst the investigation of this site was in progress rumours of other sites were relayed by a number of parish residents. Investigation of these stories gave their reliability and two additional manufacturing sites were located; one in the garden of Halfway House and the other in an Orchard lying on the opposite side of the road, both dated the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Fieldwork has since located two more production sites on the fringes of the parish, one partly in Burrington dated to c. 1699-1700 and the other partly in Elton dating to c. 1630-40. A further site has been located in Elton, c. 1680-90,

and documentary sources place others in the adjoining parishes of Ludford, c. 1714, and Orleton, c. 1711. All dates are at this stage tentatively based on national and regional typologies.

The site in the orchard is currently the subject of an exhaustive archaeological investigation. It was abandoned sometimes around 1730 when it reverted to pasture or orchard and since that time has never been ploughed. Immediately beneath the turf are the remains of buildings, kilns and working areas presenting an unparalleled opportunity to study the industry and its



Figure 1. The three types of pipes made in Ray's Orchard.

place in the rural economy. It is unusual in a number of ways. A large number of makers worked in the facility. A very large number of different stamps were used on the site. An equally large number of pipe moulds can be identified by close examination of tooting marks mirrored on the heels of the pipes: This assemblage is giving new insight into the way that makers co operated with one another and into the meaning and market significance of different styles of stamp.

The products fall into three types; Pipes with small round or ovalheels, pipes with tailed or racquet heels and pipes with a spur.

An extremely high proportion of the tailed and round heeled pipe are marked; 76 in total. Of these 12 are full names; 23 are initials and 41 are symbols of a sort or another. Of these latter 24 are varieties of wheel stamps. Not all of the stamps are produced on the site. Some are residual from a period of occupation prior to pipe production and some are probably visitor's losses, however at least 41 are likely to be products of the site. This assemblage represents the work of at least 12 makers.



Figure 2a. A full name stamp.



Figure 2b. An initial stamp.



Figure 2c. A symbol stamp.

It is possible to split the types into products of particular moulds. So far 28 different moulds of the tailed heel type and 10 of the round heel type have been identified. The spurred pipes have not yet been examined in this detail.

It is clear from the mould stamp coincidence that some makers shared moulds and so presumably common workspace- Other makers' stamps are mould specific indica-

ting private workspace, perhaps bringing their pipes from their individual cottages to the shared kiln facility. Some mould specific low grade initial stamps belonging to the major players suggest an outworking arrangement where an established maker supplied mould, stamp and clay to a cottager whose sole input was their labour.

Pipes from the same moulds and from the same contexts are found with full name stamps, initial stamps and symbol stamps. It is therefore clear that the symbols are not the marks of illiterate pipe makers but a specific product for a specific market. It is also clear that the wheel stamps are not for individual recognition but have a generic significance.

In addition to the pipes a small number of white clay wig curlers have been recovered from the site. These have been subjected to chemical analysis using Inductively Coupled Plasma Spectroscopy and compared with the clay pipes and a number of possible clay sources- The results show that the clays used for the pipes and the wig Curlers are not only very similar but likely to derive from a source in the Iron Bridge Gorge area. Local clays and the nea-

Figure 3 Stamps

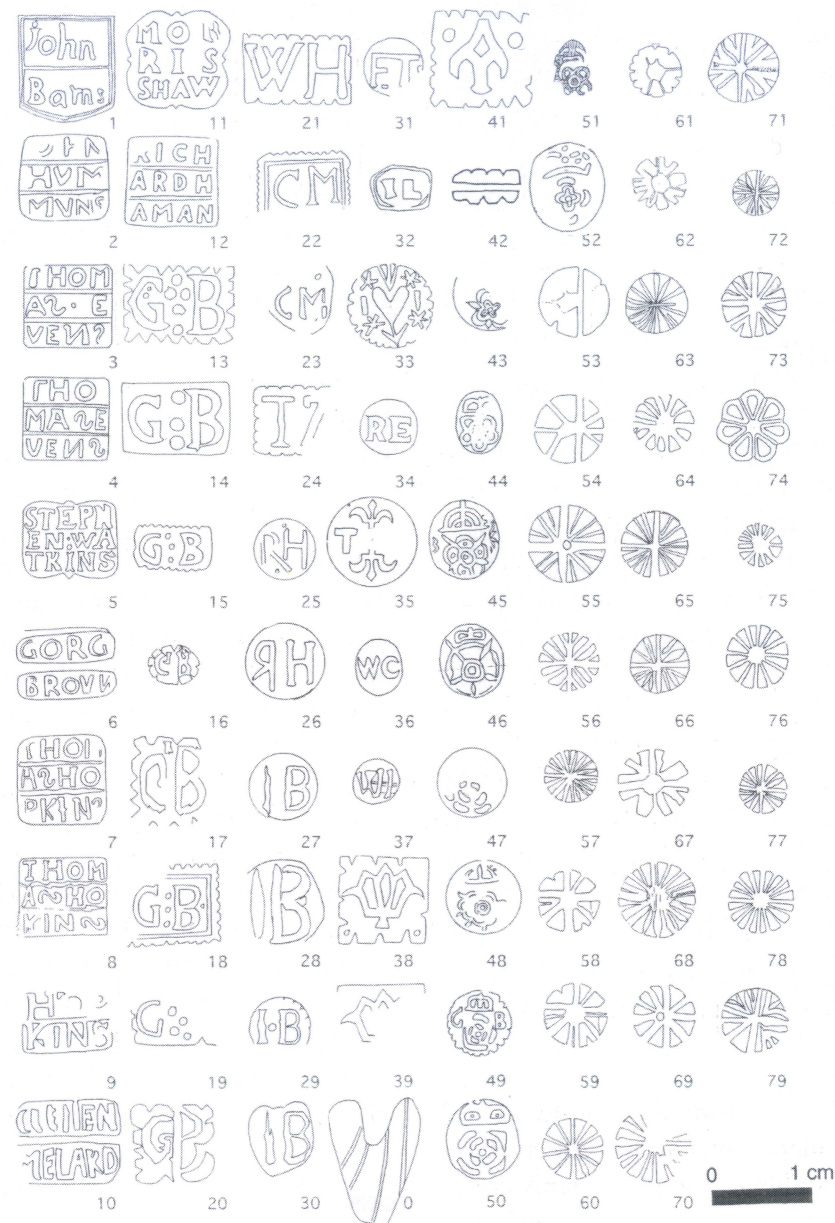


Figure 3. Stamps recorded from Roy's Orchard

rer Clew Hill clays are very different in composition and so can be ruled out as possible sources. It is therefore likely that the wig curlers were made on site by the pipe makers as a secondary product.

Infrastructure.

Excavation to date has identified a working area including one kiln; associated stoking pit and drain bounded by two buildings; the kiln being built into the wall of one of these buildings. Although the kiln survived to a height of 0.5m it was rather disappointingly robbed out in so complete a fashion as to suggest a very final decommissioning. Even the bricks of the kiln floor which were unlikely to have reusable had been removed. It was however possible, by recording the patterns and sockets that remained, to determine the construction of the floor and the positions muffle supports rising from it. This was exactly similar to a kiln base previously excavated in the garden of Half Way House, on the opposite side of the lane. The floor was of red bricks laid flat. The seven muffle supports were seen standard red bricks standing on their ends, narrow face inwards, spaced one brick width apart to a horseshoe plan.

Between each was another brick sloping outwards so that at its lowest point it was in line with the forward edge of the muffle support whilst at the top it was in line with the rear edge. By this means the fire was directed upward and outward all round a circular muffle resting on the inner half of the upper surface of each muffle support.

The muffle itself was made on site from coarse pipe clay. It would have been cylindrical devoid of external features. There is some evidence for a hole in the centre of the base, a feature already recorded in assemblages from Gloucester and Broseley. It is not yet possible to determine the height. Pipes were usually placed against a prop in the centre of the muffle, standing on the forward edge of their bowls. Fragments of a winged prop were recovered from the fill of the drain. Made from a bunch of pipes bound together at the upper end with a band of pipe clay pinched into four wings, this prop bears similarities to others from Gloucester and Chelmsford. All three differ in their method of construction but in each case the upper end is formed into four bays either by pinching or by the use of pipestems inserted in a cross.

The way forward.

Excavation will continue with the priority to examine the two buildings which appeared enigmatically along two sides of the excavated area. It is hoped to identify domestic and industrial surfaces within these with the possibility of recovering tools relating to the manufacture of clay tobacco pipes.

Allan Peacey

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