

LONDON CLAY TOBACCO PIPES

By

DAVID ATKINSON *and* ADRIAN OSWALD

Cite as: Atkinson D. & Oswald A., 1969, 'London Clay Tobacco Pipes',
Journal of the British Archaeological Association, Third Series,
XXXII, 171-227.

Reprinted from the
JOURNAL OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
THIRD SERIES. VOL. XXXII 1969

It is sometimes suggested that the habit of snuff-taking, which supplanted pipe-smoking towards the end of the eighteenth century, led to the dissolution of the company, but the suggestion does not stand up to examination. The company survived that particular change in social habits for close on a century, just as the great majority of the livery companies have survived the loss of every connection with the trades or crafts they once controlled. The two main causes of the company's dissolution were the debt it incurred in attempting to enforce its chartered rights and the lack of a livery. Until 1832 the parliamentary vote in the City was restricted to the liverymen of the companies, who also formed, and still do form, the elective assembly known as 'Common Hall' for choosing the Lord Mayor, Sheriffs, Chamberlain, and certain other officers of the Corporation. If the company had been granted a livery and so had been able to offer the attraction of the livery franchise, it would probably have survived, for the nine companies that have become extinct in the last 150 years or so have all been companies without a livery.

Little remains to be told. In March 1852 the last enrolment in the Chamberlain's books of an apprentice bound to a citizen and tobacco pipe maker was registered. In January 1868 the last admission of a freeman of the company to the freedom of the City took place. In 1869 the company was omitted from the list of City companies printed in the City Corporation's official pocket-book. Finally in June 1903 one of the company's apprentices who had been enrolled in the Chamberlain's books in 1848 made application for admission to the freedom of the City, but, as the company had been extinct for at least thirty years, his application could not be entertained. He is the last known freeman of the company and therefore has some claim to be rescued from oblivion: his name was Charles Tovey, and he was a tobacco pipe maker of 11 Matlock Street, Stepney, in the county of Middlesex.

CHRONOLOGY OF BOWL TYPES (figs. 1 and 2)

This typology of London pipes has been evolved, in the main, from the myriad specimens in the Guildhall Museum and Atkinson Collection. The dating is based on association with dated archaeological groups and with identified makers (Figs. 4, 5, 6, 9, and 10). It should be used in context with those figures which show in some cases additional varieties of shape.

Fig. 1

1. Handmade. *c.* 1580-1610, occasionally marked as Fig. 3, no. 3.
2. *c.* 1580-1610. Occurs in elongated form as Fig. 4, nos. 1, 2.
3. *c.* 1580-1610. Heart-shaped base.
Milling on the rim of these early types is rare.
- 4-8. *c.* 1610-40. In this period the two main types of the seventeenth century develop; flat bases and spurs. Milling usual.
- 9, 10. *c.* 1640-60. Increase in size.
- 11, 12. *c.* 1640-70. Heart-shaped bases.
- 13-15. *c.* 1660-80. No. 14 with degenerate spur occurs in large and small bowl sizes.

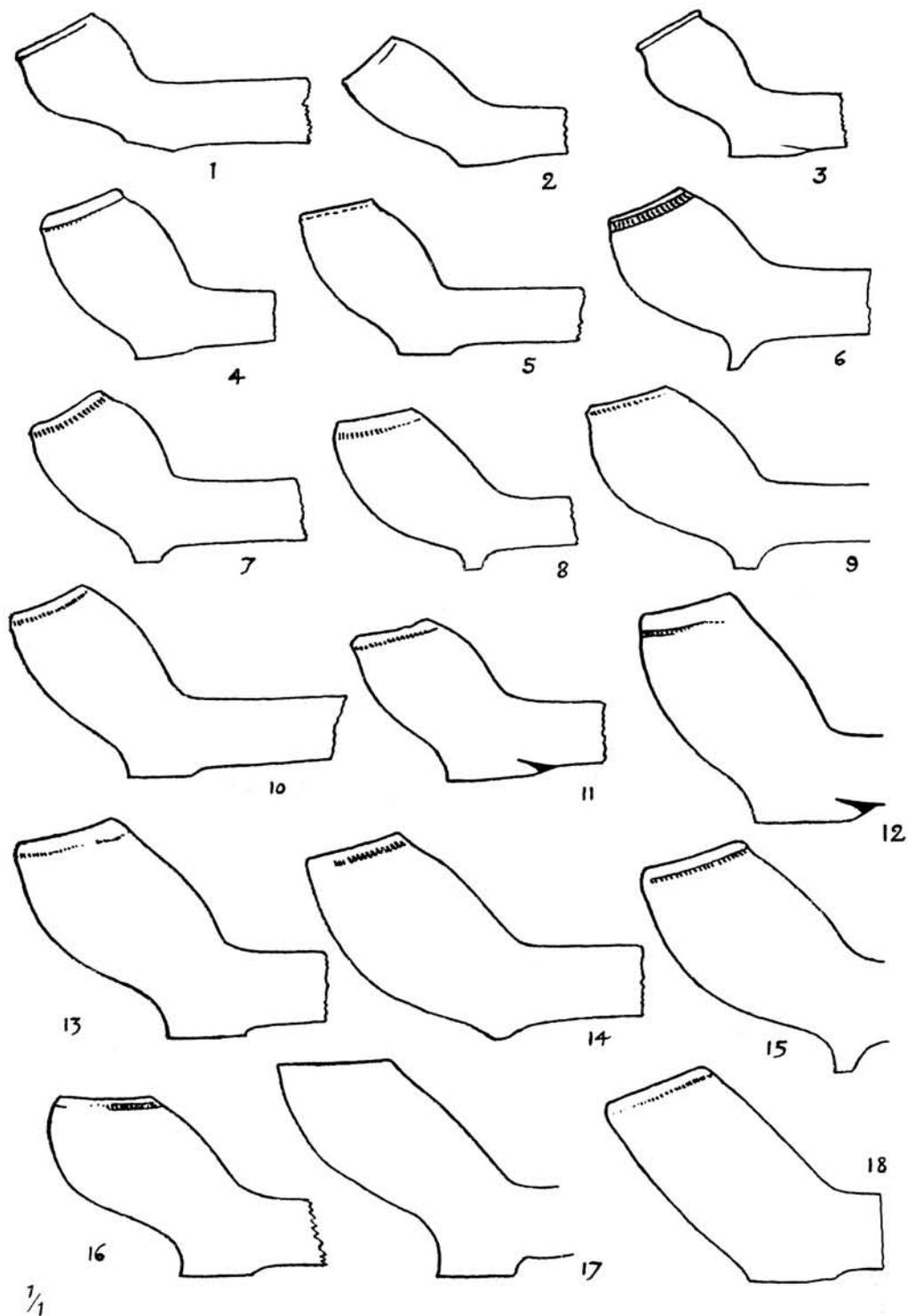


FIG. 1. Bowl Types, c. 1580-1680.

- 16, 17, West Country style with overhanging bowl and the line of the mouth parallel or nearly so with the line of the stem. Copied by some London makers, Fig. 5, no. 26.
18. *c.* 1660–80. A new type with straight sides, developing into types 20 and 22.

Fig. 2

19. *c.* 1690–1710. Late spur type.
- 20–2. *c.* 1680–1710. Long bowls some moulded initials on sides of base. For variants see Figs. 5, 9, and 10.
23. *c.* 1690–1720. West Country style, thin brittle bowls. See Fig. 5, no. 27.
24. *c.* 1700–40. American export style occasionally found in London.
25. *c.* 1700–70. Common standard south eastern type for the eighteenth century. The lip of the bowl parallel to the stem, a change that occurred about 1700. Bowl sizes vary, the earlier are longer and narrower, the thickness of stem and bowl decreases as the century wears on. For variants see Figs. 5 and 10. No milling.
26. *c.* 1740–1800. New type with forward spur, thin bowls, sometimes decorated.
27. *c.* 1780–1820. Thin brittle bowl, flat based spur. Figs. 6 and 10.
28. *c.* 1820–40. Pointed spur, small initials. Figs. 6 and 10.
29. *c.* 1840–80. Forward drooping bowl, small spur. Fig. 6, nos. 33, 37.
30. *c.* 1850–1910. Copy of the briar. Fig. 6, no. 35.
31. *c.* 1850–1910. Copy of Dutch type. Fig. 6, no. 36.
32. *c.* 1840 Occasionally found in London. Miniature.
33. Post 1840. Irish type. Although often stamped Dublin these were made at several centres in Britain from a type mould supplied to several makers.

MAKERS' MARKS

Although the majority of London pipes are plain and unmarked, some makers stamped their names or a form of trade-mark from the very earliest times, before 1600, and the style and type of mark is a useful guide to dating.

MARKS ON THE BASE OF THE BOWL

1. *Incuse*

The marks of John Stuckey of Wapping who married Mary Fletcher in 1603, and who is the earliest recorded pipe maker, illustrate admirably the progress of initial marking (Fig. 4, nos. 6–11) proceeding from the incised mark on a heart-shaped base to similar marks on round pedestal bases and finally to relief marks embellished with decoration. Apart from letter marks, other early incised marks take the form of a leaf, animal, star, sun wheel, and Tudor rose, and occasionally fleur-de-lis (Fig. 3, nos. 1 and 2).

Incised basal marks are extremely rare in London, after *c.* 1630 until some revival in the eighteenth century. An exception is the mark of S. Whitaker, in full, on West Country type bowls (Fig. 5, no. 26). He died in 1697.

2. *In relief*

Basal marking in relief was the normal method in the seventeenth century until the introduction of the larger bowls after 1670. These are generally circular stamps with incorporated stars, representations of

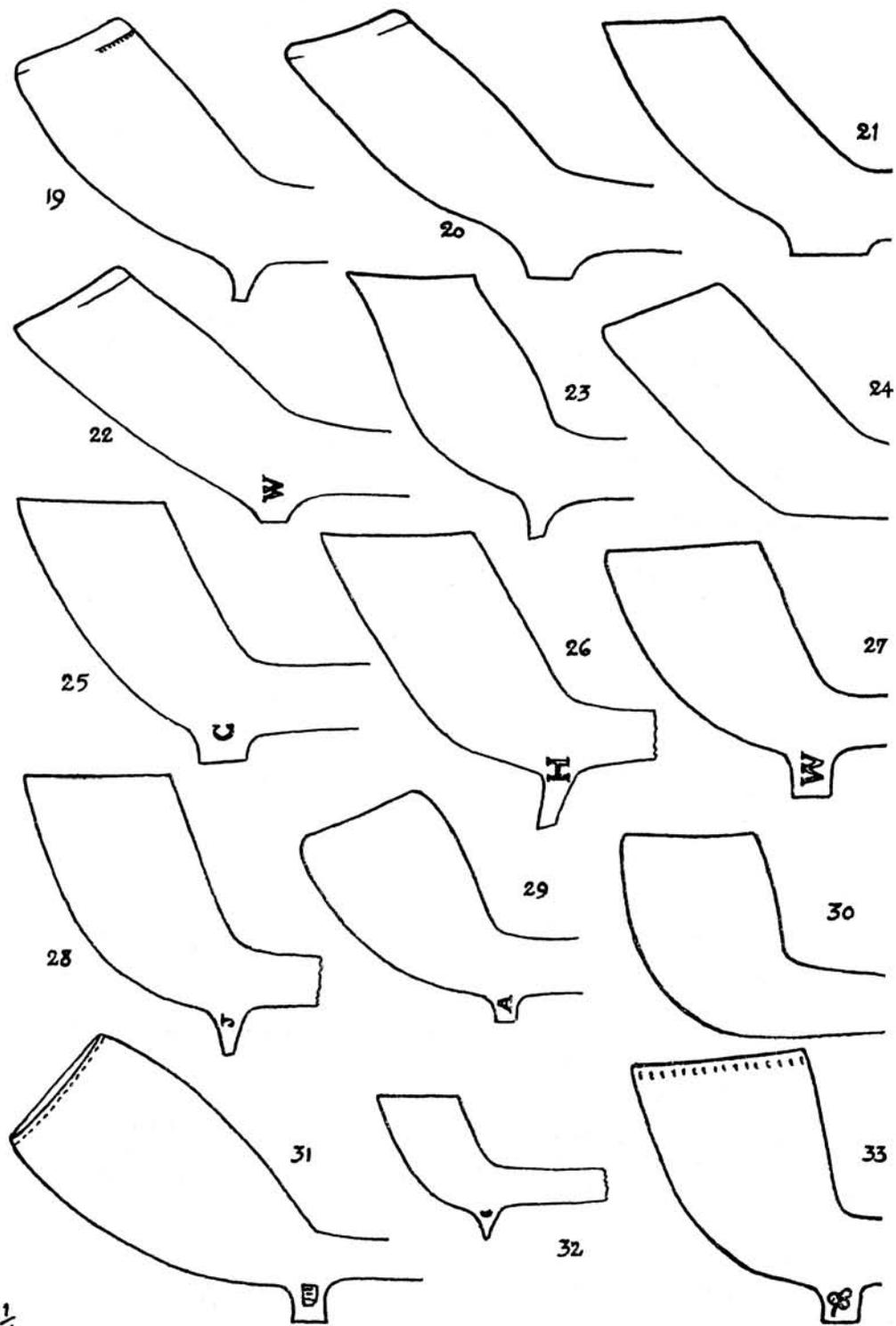


FIG. 2. Bowl Types, c. 1680-1900.