



# Bath Quays: Clay pipes and pipe kiln workshop waste

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# **Bath Quays: Clay Pipes and pipe kiln workshop waste**

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## **Introduction**

The Bath Quays excavation produced a large number of clay tobacco pipes, including several kiln waste dumps and items of kiln material. The assemblage comprises a total of 845 fragments of pipe, 18 items derived from the structure of a pipe kiln, and 30 items of kiln furniture. One context (1505) produced not only a large number of pipe fragments, but also a fragment of pipeclay figurine and pipeclay finger ring. The manufacture of such objects was a useful sideline for pipemakers, the most common examples of these objects being wig curlers such as the example from context 1001. Makers' marks appear on 140 of the pipes.

The earliest stamped pipes date from the period 1650-1690, and consist of products from Bath and north-east Somerset. These relate to the use of the landscape prior to the riverside development of the quays. The vast majority of the pipes date to the period 1730-1850, reflecting the development and use of the quayside, while the lower number of marked pipes after this date concord with the gradual decline in the pipemaking industry until the regional factories closed down either during or very soon after the 1914-1918 war.

## **The sources of the pipes and their makers**

Spread across a large number of contexts, the pipes from the Quays are quite typical for a group in Bath, with the majority of the pipes coming from either Bath or Norton St Philip, an important manufacturing centre seven miles to the south. Pipes from beyond the city are not unusual finds in Bath, but the number of pipes from outside the area is slightly higher at the quays, and these probably reflect the number of boat hands from the coastal trade who had arrived in the city on barges which used the Avon navigation. Boat hands, seeking accommodation and the variety of 'services' offered on the quays, are unlikely to have ventured into the city centre, and the pipes they brought with them remained by the riverside. Pipes from Bristol are comparatively scarce finds in Bath but, again, there is a slightly higher number here for the same reasons. Only one of the pipes bears a Bristol maker's initials, those of Thomas George (*c* 1850-1900; Price 2009, 1490-1505), but some of the decorated pipes are known Bristol forms. The two pipes which had travelled the furthest were one by Richard Legg of Broseley, Shropshire (*c* 1760-1790; David Higgins pers.comm.) and the other from Henry Leigh and Co. of Portchester (1883-1932; Fox and Hall 1979,18). Another pipe, which also probably arrived from elsewhere on one of the barges, has traces of a rubber

stamp on the back (context 1366). It has not been possible to read the stamp, even under ultra-violet light, but it probably advertises a public house or tobacconist. A pipeclay wig curler, from context (1001), is unstamped, and could have been made in Bath, Bristol, or Norton St Philip.

The makers' marks found during the Quays excavation are shown in Table 1. In the case of stamps involving more than one line of text, the breaks between the lines are indicated by a forward stroke. In the case of embossed spurs, the initials are given as left and right respectively, separated by a forward stroke.

**Table 1: Makers' marks present in the assemblage**

Stamp or mark	Quantity	Contexts	Maker and place of work
RB	1	1722	Unidentified, Bath area
RO/CARP/ENTER/BATH	10	1230, 1457(2), 1561, 1634 (2), 1694, 1722, 1794, 1633	Robert Carpenter, Bath
IC/BATH	1	1561	John Carpenter, Bath
JC, on upper left side of bowl	2	1366, 1367	James Clarke, Bath
C/W	54	1366, 1367 (2), 1387 (6), 1416 (2),  1532, 1803 (40), 1849 (2)	Thomas Clarke & Richard Ward, Bath
W/C	8	1505, 1803 (6), 1901	Thomas Clarke & Richard Ward, Bath
IO/HND/VCY	1	1581	John Ducey, Tellisford
T/D	1	1367	Unidentified. Mould re-used by Joseph Sants in Bath
RE, fleur-de-lis above	1	1627	Richard Earle, Norton St Philip
RICH/GREN/LAND	2	1418, 1510	Richard Greenland,  Norton St Philip
RICH/GREEN/LAND	20	1001, 1458 (2), 1581 (12),  1596 (5)	Richard Greenland,  Norton St Philip
RG, fleur-de-lis above	2	1648, 1794	Richard Greenland,  Norton St Philip
IEF/FRYH/VNT	1	1200	Jeffrey Hunt, Norton St Philip
IOHN/HVNT	1	1232	John Hunt, Norton St Philip or Bath
IH	1	1722	John Hunt, Bath
A/J	2	1416, 1729	Abraham Jones, Bath
T/J	2	u/s, 1924	Thomas Jones, Bath
RICH*/LEGG*/BROSLEY/  *lion* (asterisks represent stars)	1	1407	Richard Legg, Brosley
LEIGH & Co /  PORTCHESTER, on sides of stem	1	1001	Leigh & Co, Portchester

Stamp or mark	Quantity	Contexts	Maker and place of work
IAM/POB/G	2	1579, 1581	James Pobjay, Norton St Philip
IP	1	1581	James Pobjay, Norton St Philip
I/S	14	1239, 1427,  1702 (12)	Joseph Smith, Bath
S/I	5	1479, 1532,  1702 (3)	Joseph Smith, Bath
J/S	4	1367, 1645,  1838 (2)	Joseph Sants, Bath
IOHN/TYLEE, flower below	1	1941	John Tylee, Widcombe, Bath
GT	1	1341	Thomas George, Bristol

The significance of the assemblage does not extend beyond a local level, but amongst them are several interesting groups of kiln and workshop waste by local makers (contexts 1505, 1803, 1895). In each case, the deposits continued beyond the limit of excavation or had been truncated, and thus the pipes discussed here represent only a percentage of the original number. In Bath it is not unusual to find kiln material and workshop waste in the form of broken pipes, kiln debris and ash, used either as levelling material or as make-up for both housing developments and railway installations, but each group is always unique and offers an insight into some of the range of products and mould forms at particular points in time. The quays excavation produced 18 items of kiln material and 30 items of kiln furniture. Among the contexts are a number which contribute to a better understanding of local products, and these groups are worthy of discussion here.

### **Pipes from a deposit of ashy soil (context 1581) below the stone bridge**

This deposit not only produced a large number of clay pipes, but it also produces a tight date bracket for the construction of the bridge itself, as the material extended below the structure. Ninety two fragments of pipe were recovered from this deposit, and the products of three pipemakers were present. All of the bowls are of the spurred variety and thus date to after around 1685, and the makers' marks are all on stems. Twelve of the pipes were marked with the name of Richard Greenland of Norton St Philip, who died in 1710 (Lewcun 1994, 129), while an additional 12 bowls and spurs were from his moulds. Two stems bore the name and initials of James Pobjay of Norton St Philip, who was working no earlier than 1685, while there is a single stem marked with the name of John Ducy, who worked in nearby Tellisford from around 1675 until his death in 1710 (Lewcun, in prep.). These pipes alone date the

construction of the bridge to sometime between 1685 and 1710. It is the absence of any pipes by Robert Carpenter in the deposit which tightens the date of both the other pipes and bridge even further. Born in 1674, Carpenter would not have been making pipes under his own name until around 1695, bringing the date bracket for the deposit down to 1685-1695. This tighter bracket is supported by the absence of any pipes by the brothers John and Robert Tylee, working from after 1694, whose workshops were just a stone's throw away in Widcombe, on the opposite bank of the Avon (Lewcun 1994, 127).

### **Landfill deposit (1895), below the construction of Kingsmead Terrace**

Towards the west end of the site, this deposit contained a dense deposit of not just pipes but also fragments of kiln debris, all in a matrix of ash derived from kiln flue rakings. The kiln material consisted of thin fragments of fired pipeclay, which would have been used to seal areas of the kiln muffle prior to firing, and are categorised as 'thin sheets' in Peacey's study of pipe kilns (Peacey 1996, 65). Eighteen bowls were recovered from the deposit, and four individual moulds were represented in the group. The overlying deposit (1882) produced a bowl which had been squashed by the kiln having been overloaded, and this was probably derived from context (1895) or was part of the same deposit but containing less pipes. The bowls are typical of the period 1760–90, a time when makers' marks had gone out of fashion. Given the date, these pipes could have been made by any one of John Carpenter, Giles Howell, John Smith, Jeremiah Smith or Joseph Smith, each of whom was running their own workshop at different times during this period (Lewcun 1994, 130-133). The absence of any pipes bearing the initials of Joseph Smith, however, might refine the date of the deposit to 1760–80.

### **Fill (context 1702) of a cesspit at the south end of Kingsmead Terrace**

The group of pipes in the truncated fill (1702) of the stone-lined pit at the bottom of Kingsmead Terrace are all early products by Joseph Smith of Bath c 1780–90. Very few of these have been found elsewhere, and certainly not in such numbers, and there is one previously unrecorded mould form among them. In addition to 174 stem fragments, fifteen bowls and fragments of ten others were recovered. Three mould forms were present, and in each case the S was embossed in reverse, an error on the part of the mould cutter. On two of the forms, the initials are arranged in the traditional way, by which the Christian name initial is on the left side of the spur, while on the third form the initials are embossed the other way around. Amongst the material in the deposit, which also included domestic crockery and

bottle glass, were three thin strips or wires of what appeared to be pipeclay. In the absence of any identifiable kiln debris, these do not seem to indicate that the pipes were brought in as workshop waste, and they presumably relate to some other process or function.

### **Deposit (context 1803), make-up below the western pavement of Milk Street**

The group from context (1803) is one which consists of workshop kiln waste from the factory operated under a partnership between Thomas Clarke and Richard Ward at 86 Avon Street between c1790 and 1806, though their moulds carried on in use until at least 1811 (Lewcun, in prep.) Pipes with their surname initials have been found arranged in the form of either C/W or W/C on the sides of the spur, but this is the first time that the two forms have appeared together in a sealed deposit, and the circumstances conclusively confirm that both types were produced in the same factory. Although largely crushed by the weight of the overlying cobbles, five mould forms were identified among the 46 bowls, four with the initials embossed as C/W and one as W/C. Three items of kiln furniture were recovered, two rolls and one fragment of wad, each made of pipeclay. Rolls were used to separate groups of pipes in the firing chamber, while wads cemented together the series of props which formed the central spine of the kiln (Peacey 1996, 68–70).

### **Deposit (context 1505) dumped on top of the cobbled steps (1516) which led to the water's edge of the River Avon.**

Context (1505), tipped over the steps which led to the river's edge at the bottom of Avon Street, is of particular interest. The ash-rich deposit, probably derived from kiln flue rakings, produced 69 bowls from six moulds dating to somewhere between 1810 and 1840. The pipe bowls are all plain, and none of the mouthpieces or tips of the stems were glazed. Seven of the stems, four of them without a borehole, are sharply curved and probably served as supplementary furniture within the kiln. Only one pipe was marked, with the initials W/C of Clarke and Ward, but this is earlier in date. In the absence of the marks of any other makers, the remainder of the pipes are probably products of John Laffar, who is documented as having taken over the factory and purchased the working tools and moulds, probably including that for the W/C pipe, from the Clarke family in 1811 (Lewcun 1994, 135), in which case this is the first group of pipes in the city which can be attributed to him. Among the pipes were 41 items of kiln structure and furniture, as well as a small finger ring and a fragment of green-glazed figurine, both made of pipeclay. Context (1547) produced a further stem without a borehole, similar to those in (1505), from which it is probably derived.

The fragment of pipeclay figurine from context (1505) is of particular interest, as no parallel has been found in published literature. The example from the Quays is incomplete, and consists only of the legs and feet, hand-made rather than in a mould, and is coated with a pale green glaze. There is a conical indentation at top of the fragment, but in the absence of the other remains of the figurine the purpose of this is unclear. The size and simplicity of the Quays figurine suggest that this particular example was a child's toy, which presumably broke during the manufacturing process. In the 19th century there was a big growth in the mass production of toys for children, with many items being imported from Germany, but this did not gain much momentum until after 1850. The manufacture of dolls in Britain created a sideline for pipemakers, who made legs and arms, each perforated at the top, to provide moveable limbs. The Quays figurine was probably a precursor for the mass-produced lead figures of the later 19th century.

The types and quantities of kiln material from contexts 1505, 1547, 1702, 1803 and 1895 is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Kiln structure and kiln furniture.**

Context	Quantity	Description, terminology according to Peacey (1996)
1505	3	Fragments of brick, one with vitrification on one edge and another heavily burnt. Kiln structure
1505	15	Irregular lumps of fired coarse pipeclay, some recognizable as bricks. Kiln packing
1505	3	Fragments of pipeclay wads (Peacey 1996, 64)
1505	13	Thin sheets of pipeclay (Peacey 1996, 65)
1505	7	Curved stems, of which four have not been bored. Probably a variation of roll (Peacey 1996, 64)
1547	1	Curved stem, unbored. Probably a variation of roll (Peacey 1996, 64)
1803	2	Rolls (Peacey 1996, 64)
1803	1	Wad (Peacey 1996, 64)
1895	3	Thin sheets of pipeclay (Peacey 1996, 65)

### **Pipes of social interest**

There are two Irish-themed pipes in the assemblage, one with O'Brien, Mayo Street, Dublin stamped on the back (context 1233), and another with a shamrock moulded on one side and a harp on the other (context 1432). Though many such pipes were made in England, these add to the picture of the strong Irish population in the area who wished to display their patriotism both on the street, in the public houses of Avon Street, and in such institutions as the Duke of York on the quayside.



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