

A CLAY PIPE KILN AT CHEDISTON STREET, HALESWORTH

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The discovery was made by the owner of the site, Mr R. J. Nicholls, whilst digging out an inspection pit at the south end of an outbuilding, to the rear of 49 Chediston Street, in October 1975 (Fig. 16). The authors visited the site, recorded the exposed section and removed the considerable quantity of pipe fragments for study, after which they were returned to the owner.

The Structure

The hole had produced a considerable quantity of broken pipes, slabs of kiln lining (fired pipe-clay reinforced with a lattice-work of broken pipe stems), brick fragments with vitrified surfaces and broken 19th-century pottery. The north-facing section of the hole revealed a similar assemblage of rubbish contained between two walls of red brick (Fig. 16). The eastern wall terminated at the section undamaged but the western one had continued further northward and had been cut back to the section. The brick size was $9\frac{1}{2}$ ins \times $4\frac{3}{8}$ ins \times $2\frac{3}{4}$ ins through-out.

Discussion

It is clear from the debris with which the hole had been backfilled that a pipe kiln had been operating nearby, but the structure revealed showed no signs of burning. One would suggest, by parallel with pipe kilns excavated elsewhere, that the structure may represent the entrance to a kiln lying to the south (Oswald, 1975, 31), the whole area being backfilled with rubbish, both domestic and industrial, on its abandonment and the present outbuilding constructed over the area shortly after.

The Pipes

No complete pipes were found, but there were enough identifiable pieces present among the 2,000 or so fragments recovered to allow some deductions to be made with reasonable certainty.

A single bowl (Oswald, 1975, type 15) is marked on the spur M-E, a fairly uncommon pair of initials among pipemakers, and this is almost certainly a product of Matthew Emms (or Eames) of Wells, Norfolk, working between 1839 and 1854. This was the only pipe showing signs of having been smoked.

Two bowls with spurs (Oswald, 1975, type 24), marked on the spur J-L, could be ascribed with some certainty to John Lincoln of Norwich, working between 1830 and 1865.

The remaining bowls and stems fall into one of six groups:

1. Stems marked SCALED (on the left) and SEBASTOPOL (right) (Fig. 17a).
2. Bowls covered with a fish-scale design, and a characteristic decoration under the bowl, replacing the typical spur (Fig. 17b).
3. Bowls (type 23) marked on the spur w-c, otherwise plain (Fig. 17c).
4. Bowls (type 24) with a decoration replacing the spur, identical with group 2, but otherwise plain (Fig. 17d).
5. Bowls (type 24) decorated below a rouletted rim with eight panels running down onto the stem, with the same decoration replacing the spur as for groups 2 and 4, and having a Prince of Wales feathers design on the front of the bowl.
6. Stems showing the terminal ends of eight bowl panels (see group 5), and marked W. COPEMAN—BECCLES.

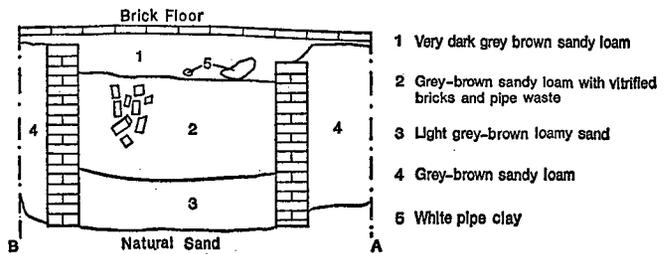
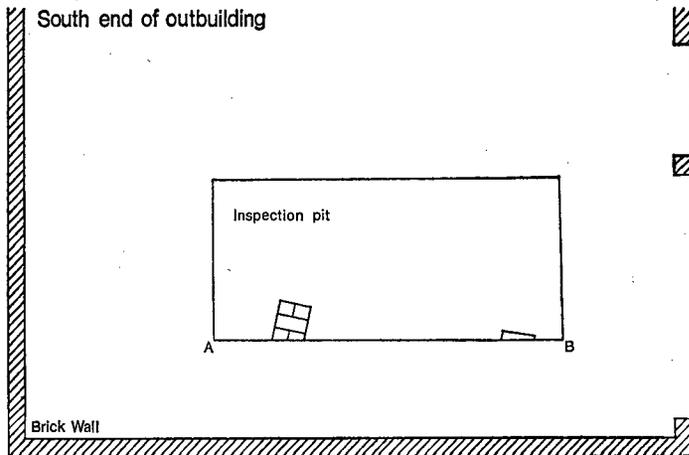
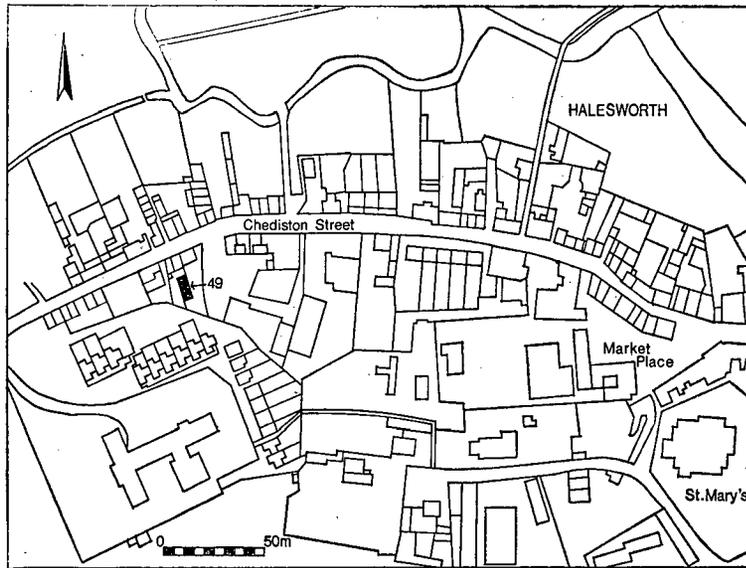


FIG. 16—Halesworth clay pipe kiln: site, plan and section.

SHORTER CONTRIBUTIONS

There can be no doubt that stems and bowls in groups 1 and 2 represent one pipe design; similarly with bowls and stems in groups 5 and 6. Similarity of design between bowls in group 4 with those in groups 2 and 5 leaves little doubt that all are from moulds cut by the same designer and, in the light of the overall evidence, from the same maker, W. Copeman of Beccles.

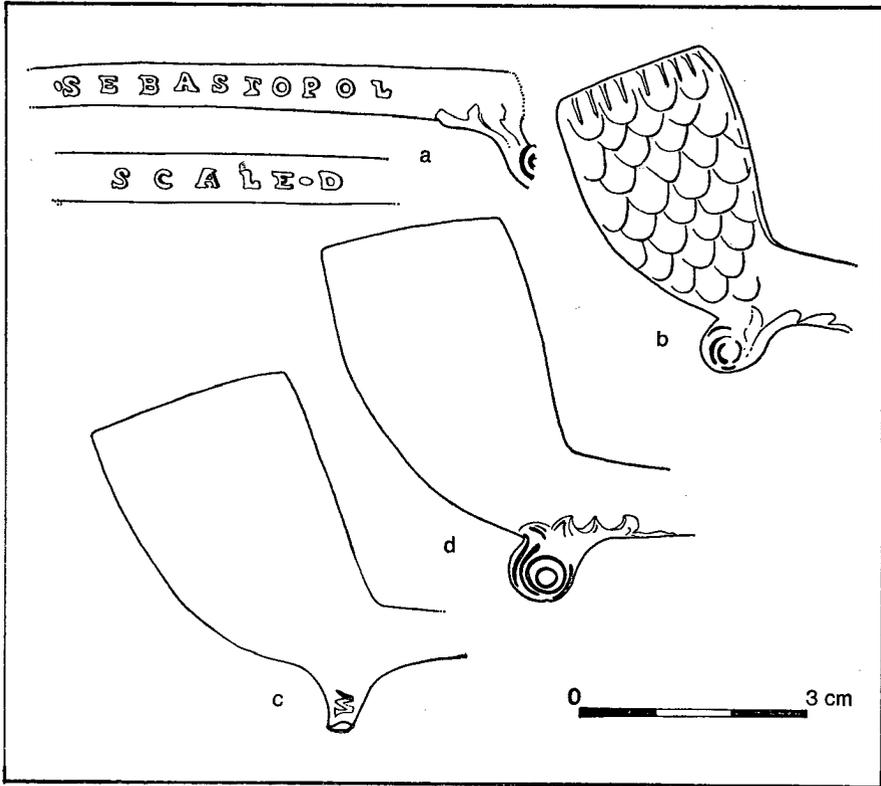


FIG. 17—Finds from Halesworth clay pipe kiln.

Dating is reasonably certain: all the pieces examined were found mixed with fragments of broadly datable domestic pottery and china. The SCALED SEBASTOPOL marking may well be a Victorian joke when considered in the light of the bowl decoration, but it also shows that the pipes can not be earlier than *c.* 1855 when Sebastopol fell to the troops of the Allies in the Crimean War. The decoration replacing the normal spur is also typical of the period.

The most interesting feature of this find is that it provides the first evidence that William Copeman of Beccles, who was, with his brother John, one of the more flourishing Suffolk pipemakers between 1835 and 1861, probably had a branch of his business outside Beccles. The 1850s saw a proliferation of branches of pipemaking firms, but this is the first evidence of this in Suffolk.

To put a name with certainty to the man running the kiln has proved impossible. No documentary evidence in the shape of directories or similar lists has so far given more than a speculative clue. There is a possibility that the kiln was operated by James Calver. A man

of this name was employed by the Copeman brothers in Beccles, his name appearing in the census returns for 1841 and 1851. He was born, apparently in Norwich, about 1821 and was married by 1851. His name does not appear in the Beccles census returns for 1861. Morris's *Directory of Suffolk*, 1868, shows among the inhabitants of Chediston Street, Halesworth, Charles Calver, marine store and earthenware dealer; James Calver, licenced hawkker; Samuel Calver, shopkeeper. It would certainly not be in conflict with the typical business methods of the time if James Calver, in the employ of William Copeman, had prevailed on his relatives to let him build one or more kilns at the back of their premises, and, as a licenced hawkker, to peddle his pipes round the countryside. Unhappily the numbering of houses in Chediston Street has changed over the years, and there has been much clearance and rebuilding in more recent times, so that there seems little chance of establishing the truth or otherwise of this idea.

The Copeman family of Beccles is well known among the pipemakers of Suffolk. The earliest reference to their pipemaking activities is a bill dated 8 June 1835, headed Copeman & Co., Pipe Manufactory, Endgate Street, Beccles, for supplying to a Mr John Fieldear nine gross of common pipes at 2s. a gross, and two boxes of short pipes at 1s. for the two boxes (S.R.O. Ipswich, HD83/6/8).

Contemporary directories, useful but not notable for accuracy, show John and William Copeman, tobacco pipemakers, Peddar's (*sic*) Lane, Beccles, in 1839. John Copeman is shown in directories between 1839 and 1864 with an address in Peddar's Lane. William Copeman appears in a directory of 1855 in Ingate Road.

Census returns are more informative. From these it appears that William Copeman was born in Hull, Yorkshire, in 1805 or 1806; he was married by 1851, and appears as a journeyman pipemaker until the census of 1861 when he is described as a master tobacco pipemaker employing two men and three women.

William's brother, John, was born in Beccles in 1811, son of William Copeman, tailor. He was married by 1851 when he was described as a master pipemaker employing eight men. By the time of the 1871 census no Copeman pipemakers are recorded for Beccles.

Reference

Oswald, A., 1975. *Clay pipes for the archaeologist*, British Archaeological Reports 14.