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BRIDGWATER AND POTTERY STUDIES

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Bridgwater together with the closely associated potteries at Nether and Over Stowey was an important production centre. Archaeological documentation of the 13th-century kiln at Over Stowey seems to have mislaid, but a selection of post-medieval pottery waste from Nether Stowey by-pass survives in the county collections (1) and a significant assemblage was excavated at Narrow Quay, Bristol (2). A sample has recently been subject to a new technique which offers easy-reference visual mapping of the mineralogy (3). In Bridgwater is evidence from the Chandos glass cone with its characteristic slip-trailed wares, imitation Bristol stoneware jars and wide range of domestic and horticultural wares (4). A close relationship with the brick and tile makers who employed throwers to make chimneys is well attested.

Bridgwater as a port was a major distributor of pottery in Somerset. Outward trade is attested by finds such as those from Nether Stowey at Penhow Castle (Newport) and South Somerset wares in Virginia and Maryland (5); inward trade by pottery from Bristol from 12th-century Ham Green ware to more recent wares and from further afield such as 13th-century pottery from the Saintonge area of SW France as shown from material from the Castle Moat and George Street excavations (6).

Informed by recently compiled strategies (7), it is suggested that four issues face the Society and ceramic studies in Bridgwater:

- 1) Production sites – only a fraction have been identified. Of those that have modern techniques of characterisation need to be applied (8);
- 2) Chronology – more good excavated sequences are required from the town and techniques of absolute dating applied to benchmark pottery types (9);
- 3) Publication – George Street needs resources to fully publish the pottery; Nether Stowey needs revisiting and characterisation needs disseminating;
- 4) Sustainability – succession training to build on existing expertise in pottery; capacity of our museums to care for and interpret the vital reference collections.

1. Coleman Smith, R & Pearson, T, 1970, *Excavations at Donyatt and Nether Stowey*, Southampton: Donyatt Research Group.

2. Good, G L, 1987, 'The excavations of two docks at Narrow Quay, Bristol, 1978-9', *Post-medieval Archaeology* 21, 25-126.

3. Andersen, J, Rollinson, G, & Dawson, D, forthcoming, 'Visualisation, quantitative methodology and matrix-inclusion separation of pottery using QEMSCAN: examples of medieval and post-medieval pottery from Somerset' in *Insights from Innovation: studies in honour of the ceramic legacy of Professor David Peacock*. Southampton.

4. Boore, E & Pearson, T, 2010, 'Red earthenware pottery from the Chandos Glass Cone, Bridgwater', *Proc Somerset Archaeol Natur Hist Soc* 153, 131-50.

5. Coleman-Smith, R, Taft Kiser, R, & Hughes, M J, 'Donyatt-type pottery in Virginia and Maryland', *Post-medieval Archaeology* 39/2, 294-310.

6. Langdon, M., & Richardson, F., 1981, 'Castle Moat, King Square, Bridgwater' in Langdon, M., & Sidaway, C. (eds.) *Bridgwater & District Archaeological Society Report 1981*. Bridgwater: Bridgwater & District Archaeological Society 23-48.

7. Grove, J, & Croft, R, 2012, *The Archaeology of South West England: South West Archaeological Research Framework Research Strategy 2012-2017*. Taunton: Somerset County Council; Irving,

A, 2011, *A Research Framework for Post-Roman Ceramic Studies in Britain*. London: Medieval Pottery Research Group Occasional Paper 6.

8. Andersen et al. above.

9. For example, Ponsford, M, 1991, 'Dendrochronological dates from Dundas Wharf, Bristol, and the dating of Ham Green Ware and other medieval pottery' in Lewis, E (ed), *Custom and Ceramics*, Wickham: APE.