

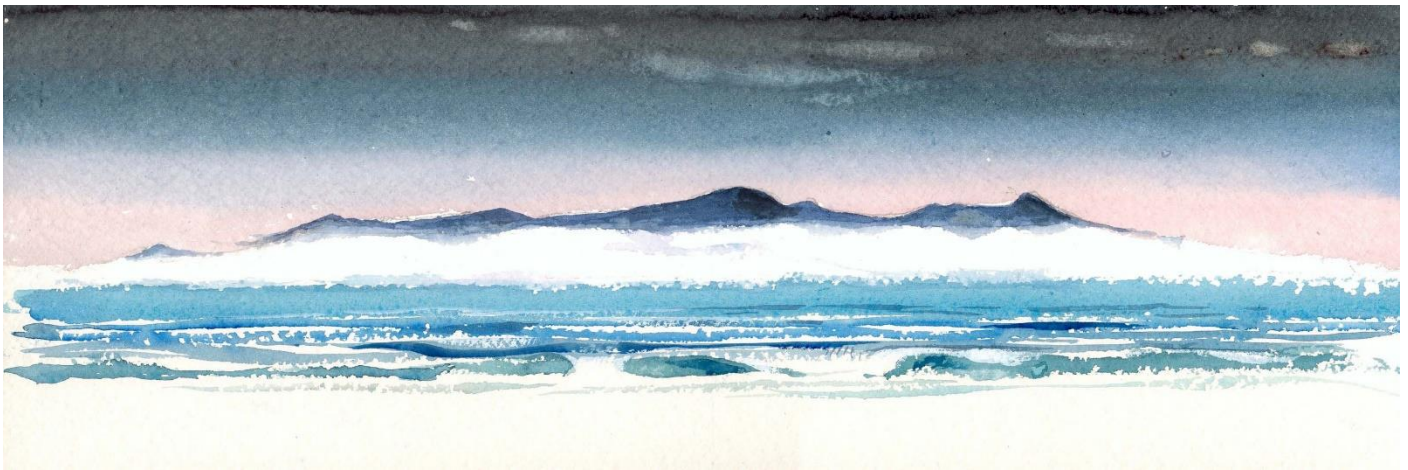
ISSN 2976-7652

**FINDS OF POTTERY AND GLASS FROM THE SITE OF THE  
WRECK OF HMS RACEHORSE 1822, THE SKARRANES,  
LANGNESS, ISLE OF MAN (CENTRE SC 27687 65132)**

Peter Davey



OCCASIONAL PAPERS ON MANX ARCHAEOLOGY 3, 2024



## OCCASIONAL PAPERS ON MANX ARCHAEOLOGY 3, 2024

### Editorial

The third issue of *Occasional papers on Manx Archaeology* deals with one main topic, the finds from the only legally protected wreck in Manx waters i.e. HMS *Racehorse*. The paper analyses some of the finds from the Manx Museum collection which has been amassed over many years.

This paper adds to the continuing story of HMS *Racehorse* since that fateful day in December 1822 when the brig sank off Langness. It also adds the question, 'Is everything discussed here exclusively from HMS *Racehorse* or are there some finds from other wrecks?' The coastline off Langness is littered with several wrecks from this period.

The paper concludes that further research could add to this continuing story.  
David Allwood

The illustration at the head of this page is by Normal Sayle and was originally intended for *Studeyrays Manninagh*.

Published by Curragh Environmental Consultancy  
Close y Corvalley, The Curragh, Ballaugh, Isle of Man, IM7 5BJ

[http://www.curraghec.org/OPMA/3\\_2024.pdf](http://www.curraghec.org/OPMA/3_2024.pdf)

Cover illustration: sherd of press-moulded slipware from the wreck  
(L21856/13 **27**)

Editors: David Allwood [davegeorgeallwood@gmail.com](mailto:davegeorgeallwood@gmail.com)  
Peter Davey [pjd1@liv.ac.uk](mailto:pjd1@liv.ac.uk)

Copyright © the authors, December 2024  
All rights reserved.

ISSN 2976-7652

## **Finds of pottery and glass from the site of the wreck of HMS *Racehorse* 1822, the Skarranes, Langness, Isle of Man (centre SC 27687 65132)**

Peter Davey

### *Introduction*

On December 14th, 1822, the British naval ship, Brig of War HMS *Racehorse* sank off Langness, in the south-east of the Isle of Man with the loss of nine lives. The wreck site was re-discovered in 1968 and in 1970 was purchased from the Ministry of Defence by the Isle of Man branch of the British Sub-aqua Club. The site was surveyed in detail in 1982, and excavations took place in 1982, 1983 and 1984 recovering over 200 artefacts. Those artefacts are now part of the national collections, cared for by Manx National Heritage and a catalogue of them can be found on the [iMuseum website](#). The site itself is at present the only legally protected wreck in Manx waters. A full account of the loss, discovery and excavation of the *Racehorse* can be found in *The wreck of the Racehorse* by Brian King and Sara Goodwins, published by Loaghtan Books in 2022. The excavation records are held in the Manx Museum library as MS 14868.

Among the many finds a total of 66 pieces of pottery and glass, including 57 sherds of pottery and nine fragments of glass were recovered and are the subject of this present study. Separate groups were accessioned by the Manx Museum in 1968 and 1974, and further sets were accepted on loan in 1984.

### *Methodology*

The sherds have all been examined using a x 10 hand lens, photographed and catalogued in a separate Excel table. Each sherd has been given a unique number from 01 to 60, with recently broken or joining sherds being dealt with under the same number. The collection is described below with the pottery first, followed by the glass, the unique number being shown in bold red. The pottery evidence is presented as examples of eleven ware types in more or less chronological order of production. The types are represented on the accompanying summary table by the three-letter codes which follow their names. The ceramics present are almost all British products of the eighteenth and nineteenth century which were also circulating widely in the Isle of Man at the time.

In some cases, the condition of the sherds, many of which are covered with an iron staining over all surfaces including broken ones, has made precise identification difficult. Any remaining doubts about bodies or glazes are reflected in the individual descriptions.

In the discussion following the catalogue, the finds are considered in relation to the site and their possible attribution to HMS *Racehorse* (page 40).

## CATALOGUE: THE POTTERY

The numbers of sherds (S) of the eleven ware types and minimum vessels (V) present are as follows:

Ware	S	V
Tin-glazed earthenware (TGE)	1	1
Press-moulded slipware (PMS)	1	1
White salt-glazed stoneware (WSS)	18	7
Porcelain (POR)	1	1
Dark glazed, red-bodied earthenware (DRB)	5	2
Pearlware (PER)	2	1
White bodied earthenware (WSE)	12	2
Feather-edged-blue (FEB)	2	2
Blue transfer-printed ware (BTP)	12	7
Industrial slipware (ISW)	2	1
Brown salt-glazed stoneware (BST)	1	1
	57	26

### ***Tin-glazed earthenware (TGE)***

L21856/13 28 (Area 5 – main gully)



Single foot-ring sherd of low-fired, buff earthenware with tin glaze on both surfaces. The glaze has worn away on all the edges of the sherd and there is a concreted section underneath in the angle between the foot-ring and the wall of the pot. The upper surface bears an area of blue sponged decoration and a very small zone of blue painting. The diameter of the foot-ring is 80mm.

This sherd was part of a plate which, given the form of similar complete parallels, would have been around 200mm in diameter, possibly slightly more.

### *Discussion*

The technology for producing tin glazed wares was introduced to Britain by itinerant potters from the Low Countries in the later sixteenth century, initially in Norwich (1567) and then in London (1571). By the early eighteenth century, it had been adopted in a number of other centres including in particular, Bristol, Liverpool and Glasgow (Jackson 1999, chapter 2).



The body, glazing and decoration of this sherd is typical of eighteenth-century products. The use of sponges to create areas of foliage or sky in the decoration is usually best associated with Bristol and is likely to date from c1730 to 1760. A good example is in the Gilbert Mellor collection from Bristol showing a well-dressed lady standing within a rural landscape consisting of sponged foliage on either side. This has been dated to c1740 (Britton 1987, 146, plate 129). A similar London-made plate showing a European figure standing in a landscape is bordered with sponged foliage and dated 1750 to 1760 (Britton 1987, 149, plate 135).

***Press-moulded slipware (PMS)***

L21856/13 27 (Area 5 – main gully)



Part of the base of a press-moulded dish with a moulded raised double circle around the centre. The body is well prepared and fired a colour between buff and pink. The whole upper surface is covered with a layer of yellow slip, on top of which orange and brown slip trailing has been added. The diameter of the inner circle is 94mm; given many complete or completely reconstructed parallels, this would suggest that the dish would have had a diameter of between 270 and 420mm (eg Kelly 1969, 22-39, figs 1-55).

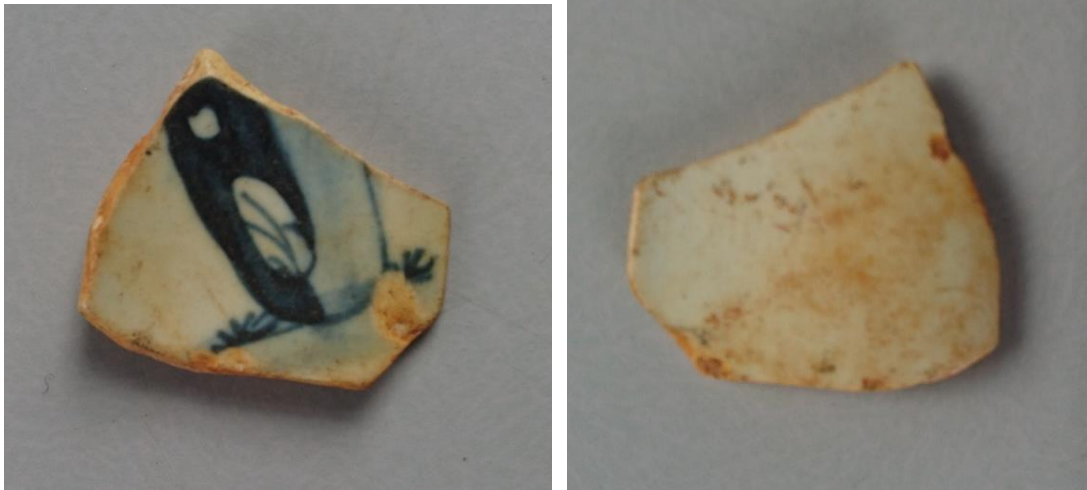
***Discussion***

Slipware was first made in Britain in Somerset in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. Its production spread to other centres in the seventeenth but was mainly based on thrown vessels. Press-moulding was developed in the later seventeenth century, became the norm in the eighteenth and continued throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries. Sourcing and dating can be problematic (Longworth and Davey 2016, 170-1). The main features to consider are relatively intangible, such as fabric, quality and style of decoration.

This sherd is of good quality, relatively thin-walled (maximum of 6mm) and cleanly decorated. It is most likely to be a product of the English midlands, though the stylistic freedom exhibited might suggest another centre such as early period Buckley, for example the complete dish dated 1690 to 1720 from Brookhill (Amery and Davey 1979, 58-59, no 21). This piece is clearly an eighteenth-century product and had been given a provisional date range of between 1710 and 1750.

**Porcelain (POR)**

L21856/13 29



Rim from a shallow bowl; blue painted decoration on the interior, undecorated externally; surface and broken edges iron-stained; only 8mm of the rim arc survives; estimate of diameter range from 80mm to 150mm [L=28].

Because of the size and condition of the piece it has proved difficult to identify its exact form and source. On examination under hand lens the body might be English or Chinese hard-paste. A number of features suggest a Chinese rather than English origin. First, internal decoration on cups or bowls is almost unheard of in English products. The only example found in an extensive search of dated and sources hard-paste are pickle trays from Bow dated 1756-65 and a porringer from Worcester dated 1752 (Watney 1963, pls 10D and 25B). The rim angles of the former are too flat and the latter too vertical for the Manx find. In contrast, excavated eighteenth-century Chinese products include a number of bowls with similar rim forms and from the study of a large, closed assemblage from Bewsey Old Hall, Warrington by Dominic Bejanic (Lewis, Heywood and Howard-Davis 2011, 146-54, pls 45, 46, 52 and 53).

The style of the decoration fits much better with Chinese export products of the eighteenth century before they became stylised for the European market. Contemporary British products have much fussier, studied, self-conscious designs with much more detail.

Finally, examination of a small area on one of the broken edges which is not covered with iron staining, under a x 30 binocular microscope revealed a dense, milky white body very typical of Chinese products.

It is likely that this sherd is Chinese dating from sometime in the eighteenth century.

**White salt-glazed stoneware (WSS)**

L21856/13 31 (Area 5 – main gully)



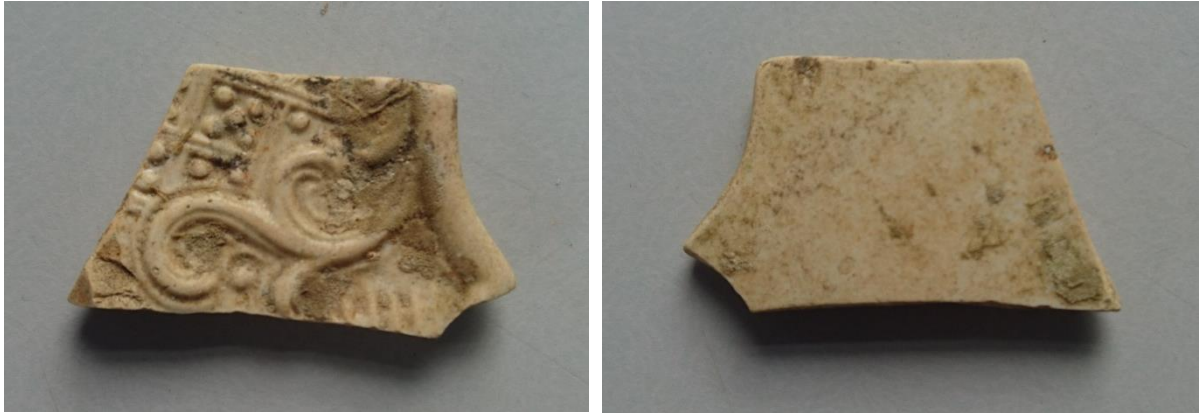
Rim sherd from a plate with moulded seed or barley decoration and scalloped edge; diameter = 210mm; probably the same vessel as no 32 [L=65mm]; (Jennings 1981, 222-3, pl 1c).

L21856/13 32 (Area 5 – main gully)



Rim sherd from a plate with moulded seed or barley decoration and scalloped edge; diameter = c220mm; the same vessel as no 31? [L=40mm] (Jennings 1981, 222-3, pl 1c).

L21856/13 33 (Area 5 – main gully)



Rim sherd from a plate with moulded basket decoration and scalloped edge; not possible to measure diameter because only a short section of wavy edge is present but given the scale of this feature the plate must have been over 220mm wide; probably the same vessel as no 34 [L=53mm]; (Lewis, Heywood and Howard-Davis 2011, 142, fig 69, no 2).

L21856/13 34 (Area 5 – main gully)



Rim sherd from a plate with moulded basket decoration and scalloped edge; not possible to measure diameter because only a very short section of wavy edge is present but given the scale of this feature the plate must have been over 200mm wide; probably the same vessel as no 33 [L=44mm]; (Lewis, Heywood and Howard-Davis 2011, 142, fig 69, no 2).

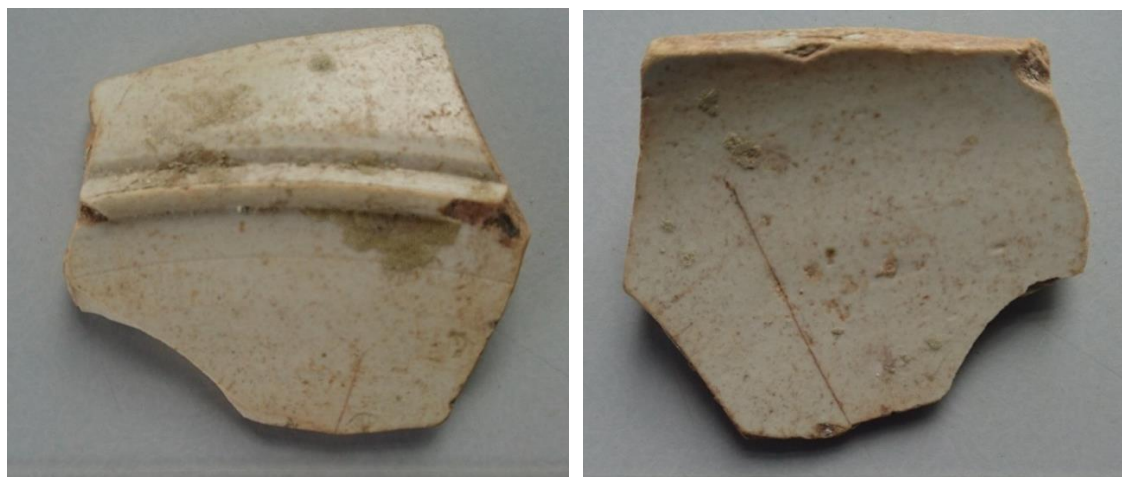


L21856/13 35 (Area 5 – main gully)



Rim sherd from a plate; undecorated; diameter = 240mm [L=65mm]; (Jennings 1981, 224, fig 101, no 1595).

L21856/13 36 (Area 5 – main gully)



Foot-ring from a large shallow bowl; undecorated but the surface is scratched and iron stained; diameter of foot-ring = 290mm and the bowl itself must have been well over 310mm wide at the rim [L=63].

L21856/13 37 (Area 5 – main gully)



Foot-ring from a bowl; undecorated; diameter of foot-ring = 60mm [L=62mm]; (Jennings 1981, 223-4, fig 101, no 1579, dated 1740-1760).

L21856/13 38 (Area 5 – main gully)



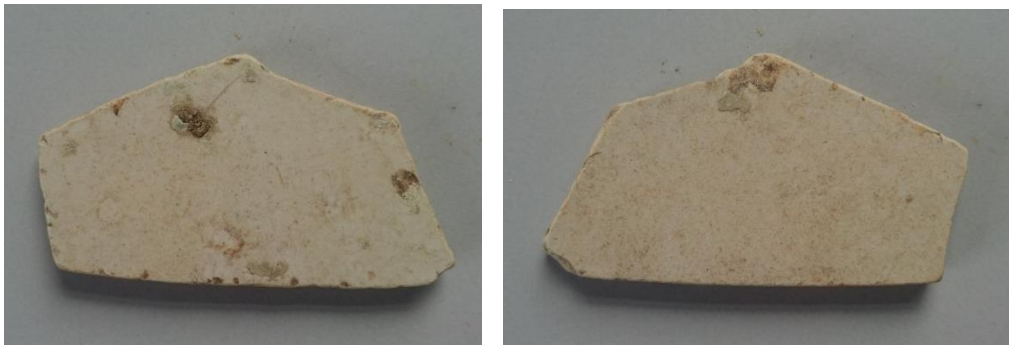
Foot-ring from a thin-walled bowl; undecorated; diameter of ring = 80mm [L=62mm]; (Jennings 1981, 223-4, fig 101, no 1579, dated 1740-1760).

L21856/13 39 (Area 5 – main gully)



Base sherd probably from a plate; maximum thickness = 7mm [L=95mm].

L21856/13 40 (Area 5 – main gully)



Base sherd probably from a plate; maximum thickness = 7mm [L=90mm].

L21856/13 41 (Area 5 – main gully)



Base sherd probably from a plate; maximum thickness = 8mm [L=77mm].



L21856/13 42 (Area 5 – main gully)



Base sherd probably from a plate; maximum thickness = 4.5mm [L=79mm].

L21856/13 43 (Area 5 – main gully)



Base sherd probably from a plate; maximum thickness at the angle of the base of the wall = 6mm [L=52mm].

L21856/13 44 (Area 5 – main gully)



Base sherd probably from a plate; maximum thickness = 4mm [L=55mm].



L21856/13 45 (Area 5 – main gully)



Base sherd probably from a plate; maximum thickness = 5mm [L=44mm].

L21856/13 46 (Area 5 – main gully)



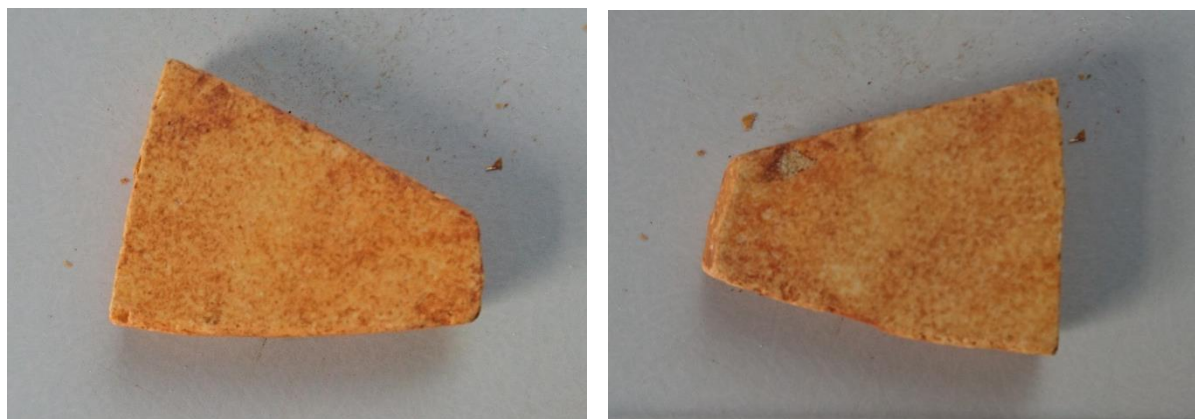
Base sherd probably from a plate; maximum thickness = 3mm [L=46mm].

L21856/13 47 (Area 5 – main gully)



Base sherd probably from a plate; maximum thickness = 4mm [L=39mm].

L21856/82 **56**



Base sherd probably from a plate; maximum thickness = 8mm [L=43mm].

#### *Discussion*

These 18 sherds from a minimum of seven vessels – four plates and three bowls – all bear the characteristic dimpled surfaces distinctive of salt-glazing; the stoneware bodies are well refined and decoration, where it occurs, is moulded. This ware type was developed out of the brown salt-glazed stonewares in the English midlands in the early eighteenth century. Initially, from around 1720, the white outer surface was created by dipping a white firing mixture over a grey firing body and, by the 1730s, a fully white bodied variety became the norm. The *floruit* is 1740 to 1770 as after c1760 Creamware which could be made more cheaply and quickly, took over the market for mass-produced table wares. The mould-decorated sherds from the HMS Racehorse site are typical of that middle period and probably date from between 1740 and 1760 (Mountford 1971, 29-30; Godden 1974, 86, pl 103; Jennings 1981, 222-6). They are relatively common finds throughout these islands, for example the 269 sherds from, at least, 116 vessels found at Bewsey Old Hall, Warrington, Cheshire (Lewis, Heywood and Howard-Davis 2011, 141-2, fig 64) and the 50 sherds from 19 vessels recovered from the Peel Castle excavations in the Isle of Man (Davey 2002, 426).

***Dark-glazed, red-bodied earthenware (DRB)***

L21856/13 49 (Area 5 – main gully)



Body sherd from a large storage vessel, glazed on both surfaces; the body contains white and dark red clay inclusions scattered through it.

L21856/13 50 (Area 5 – main gully)



Body sherd from a small hollow ware vessel, glazed on both surfaces; the body contains quite large white and dark red clay inclusions scattered through it.



L21856/13 51 (Area 5 – main gully)



Body sherd from a small hollow ware vessel, glazed on both surfaces; the body contains white and dark red clay inclusions scattered through it.

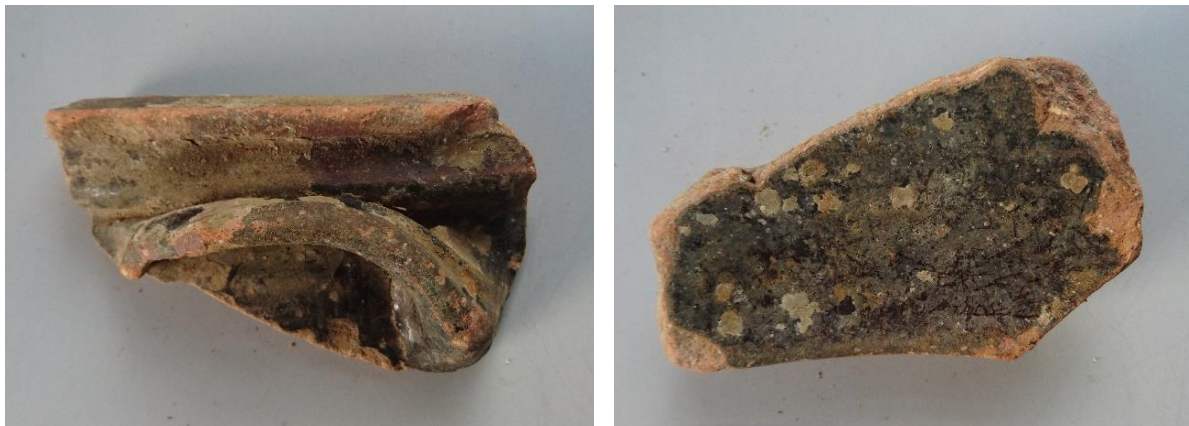
L21856/13 57 (Area 6 – main gully)



Body sherd from a large storage vessel, glazed on both surfaces; the body contains white and dark red clay inclusions scattered through it with some white streaking.



No accession or loan number 60 (U/S)



Rim sherd from a large storage vessel with horizontal strap handle; the body contains small white and dark red clay inclusions as well as white streaking. At the rim the pot has a diameter of almost 400mm, and given the curvature on this sherd, it was at least 0.4m high.

#### *Discussion*

These five sherds from at least two vessels are of a type that was produced from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century until the twentieth century. It developed out of Cistercian ware, becoming less refined and more down-market with increasing competition from finer wares. The bodies and glazes of these sherds are all consistent with their production from Coal Measures clays in one of the many centres in Britain (Davey and Longworth 2016). There is nothing diagnostic about these five sherds to allow attribution to a particular centre, even though the rim sherd can be paralleled closely in Prescott, south Lancashire (Davey and Longworth 2016, 137, fig 88).

Dating is also problematic because of the conservatism of the technology. In general, the use of mixed clays was phased out from the end of the eighteenth century and more refined materials were used, but this it to generalise and such an observation cannot be given undue weight. All five sherds have a distinctly eighteenth-century appearance, but this is a subjective observation. It must remain possible that at least these two vessels date from the early part of the nineteenth century.

**White bodied earthenware (WSE)**

1968-0269C **01**



A base sherd probably from a plate; one end has been damaged since retrieval; maximum thickness = 5mm [L=57mm].

1968-0275D **05**



Two joining base sherds probably from a plate; the sherd as originally retrieved has been broken in two since the accession number was written on it; a further edge of both sherds has also been broken recently; maximum thickness = 5mm [L=49mm].

1968-0275D **06**



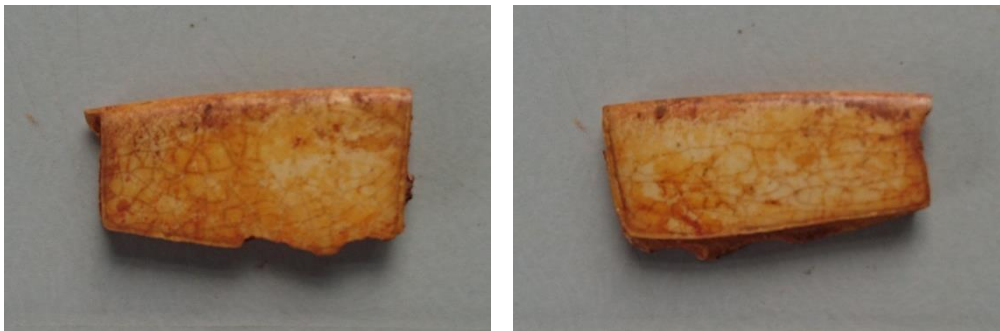
Five small joining sherds from the inside of a rim probably from a plate; the breakages are post-retrieval; diameter of the inner edge = 160mm; maximum thickness = 6mm [L=39mm].

1968-0275D 07



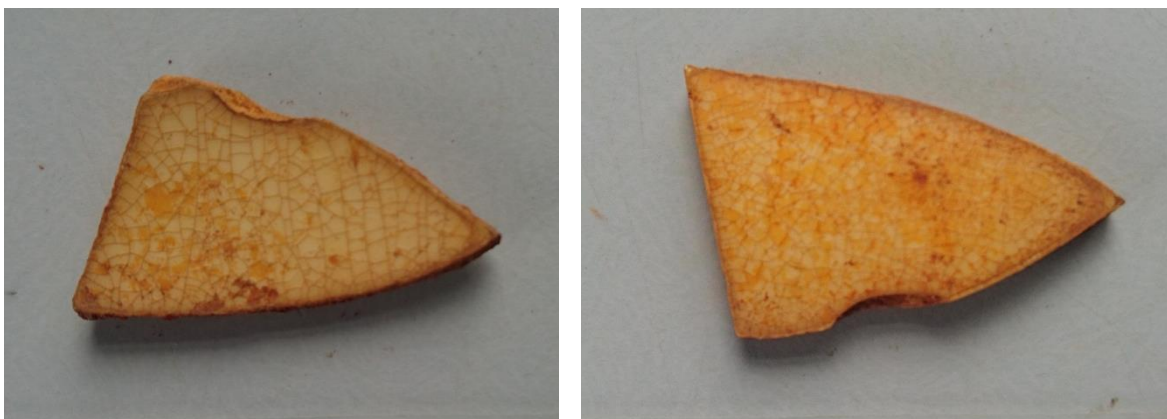
A small, very encrusted, rim sherd probably from a plate; diameter = 320mm; maximum thickness = 4.5mm [L=23mm].

1968-0275D 08



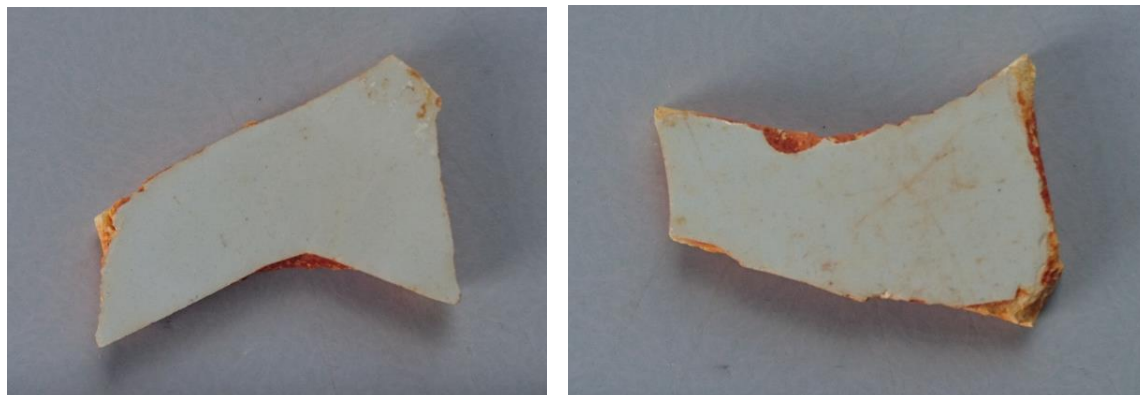
A rim sherd probably from a plate; diameter = 320mm; maximum thickness = 4.5 maximum thickness = 5mm [L=49mm].

1968-0275D 09



A body sherd probably from a plate; maximum thickness = 5mm [L=40mm].

1968-0275D 10



A body sherd probably from a plate; maximum thickness = 4.5mm [L=42mm].

#### *Discussion*

These twelve sherds derive from at least two vessels. Two of the rim sherds (nos 7 and 8) are very similar in form and thickness and are very likely to be from the same vessel. The other rim (no. 6), now in five fragments only survives as the interior edge but is clearly thicker than the other two, thus implying two different vessels. The remainder of the body sherds are all likely to derive from plates and are very consistent in body and thickness with nothing to distinguish them from each other.

The highly refined, fine grained, evenly fired white body is typical of the mass produced earthenwares that were developed in British potteries in the early nineteenth century. They developed out of creamware and pearlware, were cheaper to produce and achieved a completely white finish. They were superseded around 1840 by the so-called 'stone china' which became the core material for a wide range of wares made in huge quantities both for the home and export market (Ewins 1997, 140-8). Nevertheless, this basic form of white earthenware continued to be used for the cheapest products throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century (Labonté-Leclerc and Léouffre 2016b, 237, 244).

These finds from the site of HMS *Racehorse* can be dated only broadly to after around 1810 and could possibly have been produced up to a hundred years later.



**Blue transfer printed ware (BTP)**

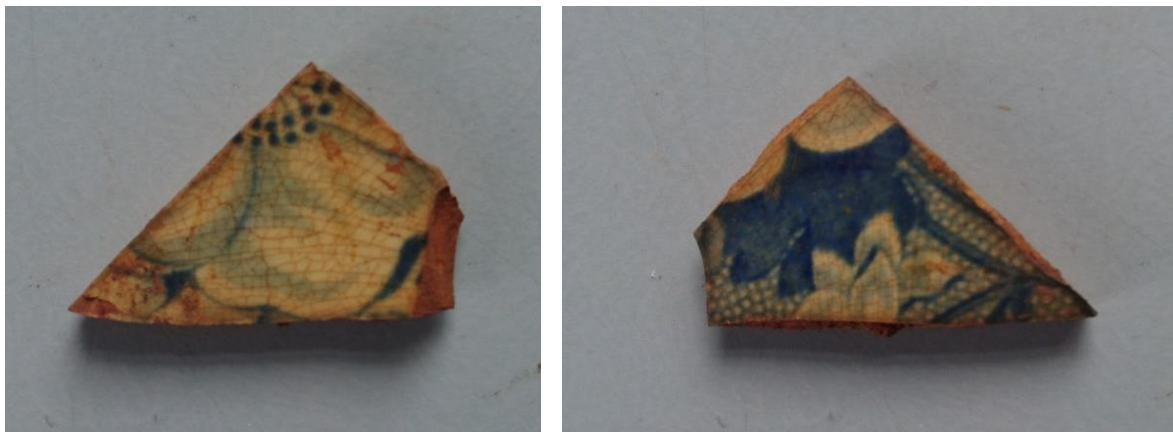
All examples show blue transfers on a white earthenware body.

1968-0269C 02



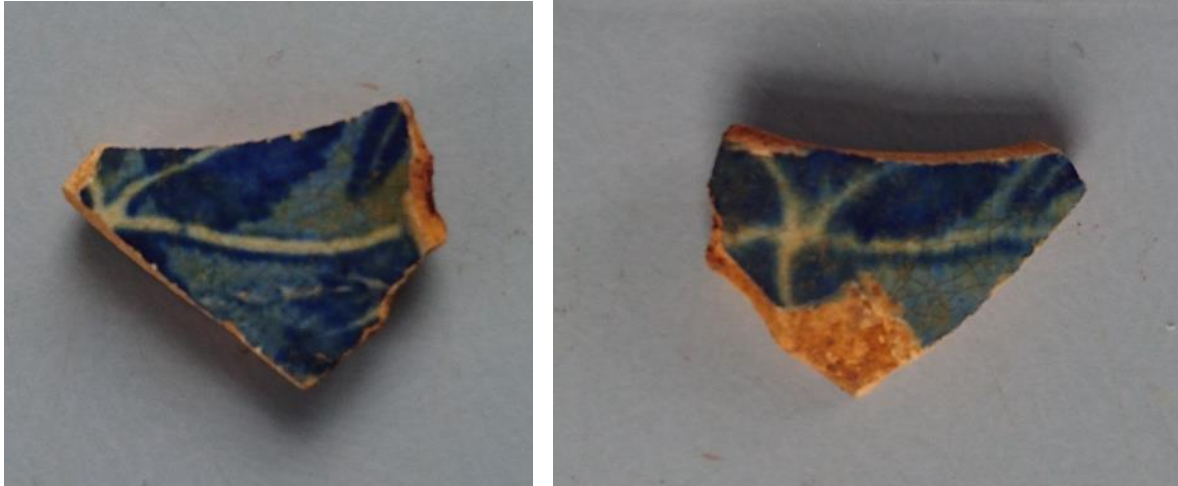
Straight-edged rim sherd from a large plate with a diameter based on the arc of the internal edge of more than 260mm; blue floral pattern on upper surface; pearlware glaze [L=94mm].

1968-0275D 11



A body sherd from a hollow-ware vessel, probably a bowl as the floral decoration is on both surfaces [L=31mm].

1968-0275D 12



A body sherd from a hollow-ware vessel, probably a bowl as the floral decoration is on both surfaces [L=26mm].

1968-0275D 13



A base sherd, probably from a plate with, on the upper surface a rural scene in the centre, possibly depicting a Mediterranean or classical landscape; underneath is part of a blue rectilinear open frame with a scroll on the side; almost certainly the same vessel as no 58 below; pearlware glaze [L=43mm].

1974-0251 **20**



A rim sherd from a plate with geometric overlapping key patterns; diameter = 270mm; pearl glaze [L=63mm].

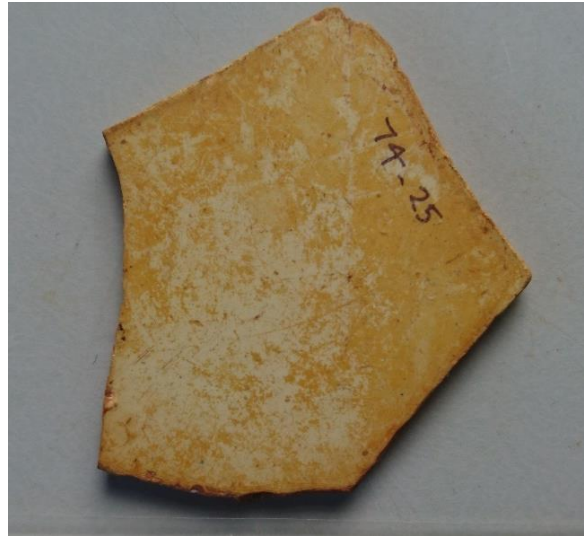
1974-0251 **21**



A rim sherd from a plate with geometric overlapping key patterns; diameter = 270mm; pearl glaze [L=45mm].



1974-0251 22



A base sherd from the centre of a plate with an English landscape rustic design including a classical portico and the wing of a possible 16<sup>th</sup> or seventeenth century date, seen through a group of trees; [L=64mm].

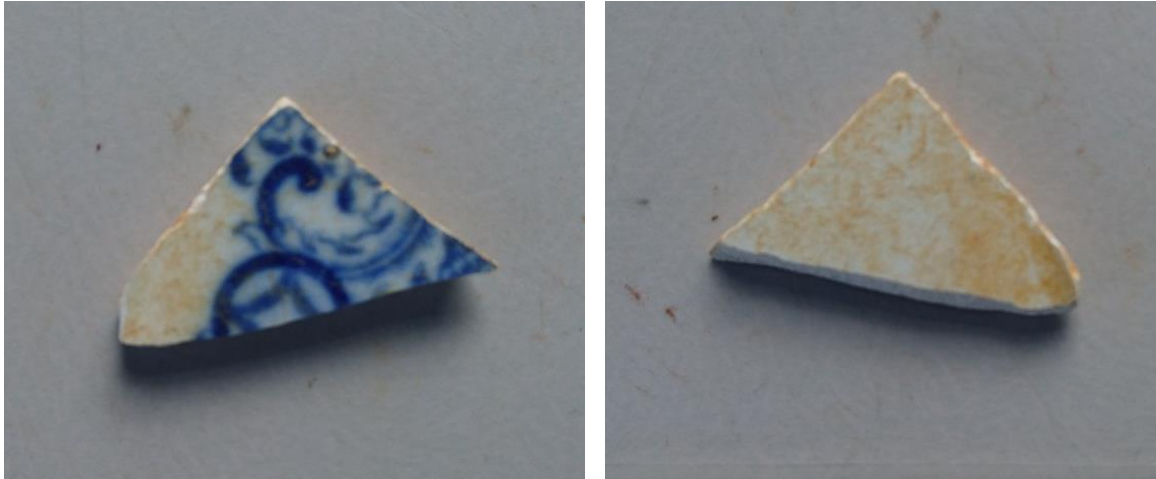
1974-0251 23



A body sherd from a hollow-ware vessel probably a jug as decorated only on the outside; the fragment of design that remains shows an elevation of late medieval building with buttresses seen through foliage, probably an English landscape; pearlware glaze [L=60mm].

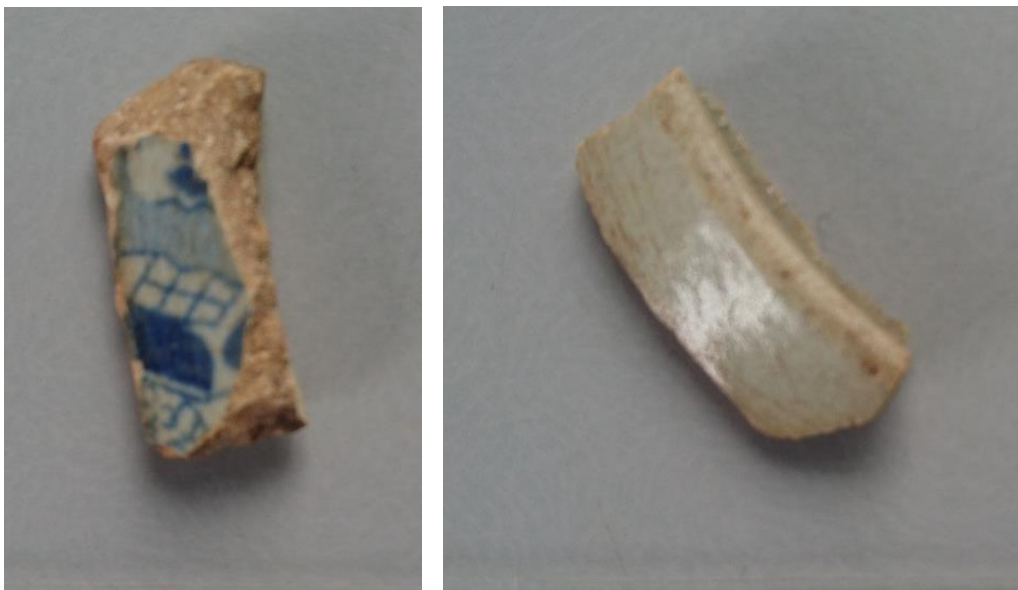


1974-0251 **24**



A rim sherd from a plate with geometric overlapping key patterns; it joins no 21 above with a fresh post-retrieval break; pearlware glaze [L=31mm].

L21856/13 **30**



A fragment of foot-ring from a plate with fragmentary geometric design, too small to be identified; pearlware glaze [L=29mm].

L21856/91 58



Two joining base sherds from a plate with a shallow foot-ring; the design on the upper surface is classical with an unroofed arched structure in the foreground, on the corner of which the sculpture of a female figure has been placed; in the background a rustic scene includes a walled tower house with a turret; on the underneath there is a part of a blue rectilinear open frame with scrolls on top and sides; the diameter of the foot-ring is 180mm; pearlware glaze [L=129mm].

#### *Discussion*

Transfer printing was developed in the 1760s and used initially on creamware, then from the 1780s applied to pearlware. As a technique it continued to be widely used through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

These twelve sherds from at least seven vessels are in many ways the most straightforward of the nineteenth-century wares present on the HMS Racehorse site to attempt to date. Despite the serious discolouration of the glaze caused by sea water at least four of the vessels can be identified as being in pearl ware. This would place them in the range 1790 to 1830 (Holdway 1986; Halfpenny 1986, 89-106; Labonté-Leclerc and Léouffre 2016a, 234).

Study of the designs involves a combination of art-historical analysis combined with dated and maker-marked examples (Miller 1980; 1991). The earliest designs up to around 1815 copied Chinese originals or were European interpretations of Chinese styles – so-called *Chinoiserie*. Then, from around 1810 to as late as 1840, English rural scenes, exotic Mediterranean or classical landscapes became popular (Labonté-Leclerc and Léouffre 2016b, 239). The designs on the transfer-printed wares can be classified as follows:

*Willow pattern (20, 21, 24 and possibly 30)*

These four sherds are considered to represent one minimum vessel. The two rims (20, 21) which do not join, have identical diameters and design details and no. 24 joins no. 21. This was a peculiarly English design created within a *Chinoiserie* context but becoming extremely stylised and formulaic. Although beginning in the later eighteenth century, the pattern remains popular to this day. These rim sherds do not show the willow pattern story itself, but all have the standard key design that virtually always went with it. The single vessel present in the HMS racehorse assemblage is pearl glazed and so almost certainly dates from after 1800 and before 1840.

*English rural scenes (22, 23)*

The architectural detail on these two vessels, one a plate (22) and the other probably a jug (23), strongly suggests an English environment. The plate fragments depict a large building with a classical portico alongside a window with typical sixteenth- or seventeenth-century fenestration. The jug has part of a medieval building, judging from the buttresses, seen through foliage. This kind of structure is common on country estates that are based on dissolved medieval monasteries.

These scenes are typical of the period 1810 to 1830.

*Exotic Mediterranean or classical scenes (13, 58)*

These three sherds are almost certainly from the same vessel. The smaller non-joining fragment (13) is clearly part of the same design and separated by only a few millimetres from the other sherds. The blue 'stamp' print on the back is the same and the line of hills can be clearly followed from one to the other. The form of the hills and the architecture of the buildings shown in the background between the classical structure in the foreground and to the left of it have a distinctly Mediterranean appearance. This vessel with its very clear and detailed transfer probably dates to the period 1810 to 1830.

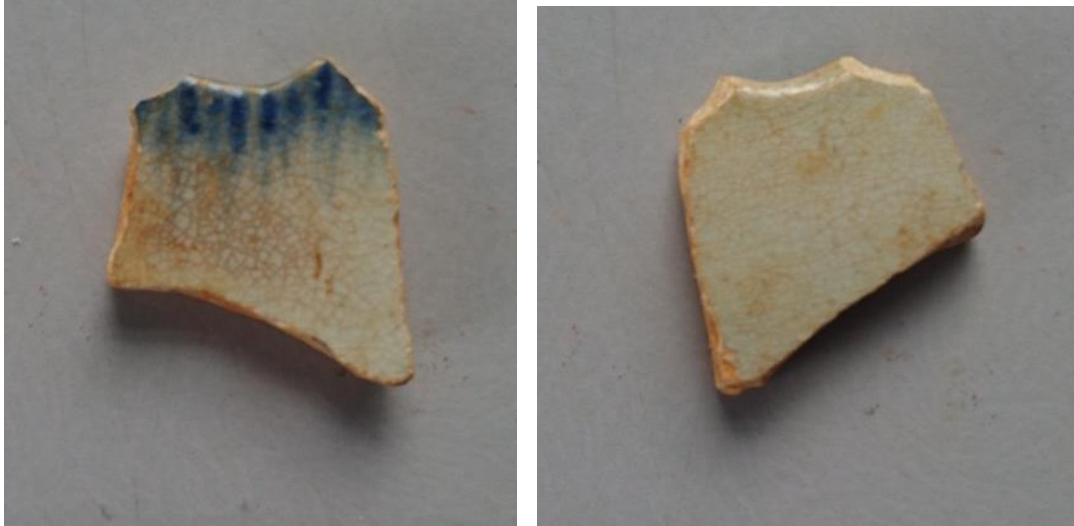
*Floral designs (2, 11, 12)*

These three vessels, one flat and the other two hollow, contain bold floral designs in deeply contrasting shades of blue. Such floral presentation can also be seen on the edge of the Mediterranean scene above (58). Dated examples of this type and quality of decoration belong usually to the first two decades of the century, for example the maker marked plate illustrated by Godden dating from 1811 to 1817 (Godden 1975, 240, pl 314). These vessels are all likely to date from between 1810 and 1830.

**Feather-edged blue (FEB)**

There are two sherds from different vessels.

1968-0275D **14**



Rim sherd from a plate with blue-stained parallel incisions on the upper edge; the fragment is too small, and the edge mainly occupied by the scallop so that its diameter cannot be estimated; pearlware glaze [L=27].

1974-0251 **25**



Rim sherd from a plate with blue-stained parallel incisions of uneven width and depth on the upper edge; the fragment is too small, and the edge mainly occupied by the scallop so that its diameter cannot be estimated [L=52].



### *Discussion*

This is white earthenware, also called 'shell-edge blue', with a clear or pearlware glaze. The rims of both plates are scalloped and decorated on the upper edges by short incised, more or less parallel lines that are stained blue. It can be dated in the same way as the transfer-printed ware, that is by using marked examples and looking at its evolution over time. Stoke-on-Trent Museum has a number of early examples with Chinese style designs around the centre and dating from 1780 to 1800 (Halfpenny 1986, 93, pls 148, 150). A majority of all later products are plain apart from the feather edge.

The more tightly decorated example from the HMS Racehorse site (25) looks early and may date from between 1800 and 1820; unfortunately, the character of the glaze chemistry cannot be defined (Miller *et al* 2000, 4, fig 5B, 1802-32). A similar type of edging is visible on a plate excavated in the royal place in Quebec and dated to between 1800 and 1830 (Labonté-Leclerc and Léouffre 2016b, 242, fig 170a ). The other more regularly executed example (no. 14) which is in pearlware is likely to date from between 1810 and 1835 (Hunter and Miller 1994; Miller *et al* 2000, 4, fig 5D, 1809-31).

### ***Pearlware (PER)***

There are two pearlware sherds from different vessels.

1974-0251 **26**



An almost complete rod handle for a jug; it is stained and scratched but the blue cast of the glaze is clear; there is no sign of decoration (L=89).

L21856/13 48



Part of a strap handle from a hollow-ware vessel with lateral ribs; two tiny spots on the upper surface suggest that the remainder may have been decorated by blue painting [L=45].

*Discussion*

These two handles must be considered in light of the rest of the collection from the site which includes pearlware items such as the transfer-printed blue and feather-edged blue. The rod handle (no. 26) might belong to one of the hollow-wares in the former group, for example the jug (no. 23) or either of the floral design vessels (nos 11, 12). This handle is not, therefore, counted as a separate minimum vessel. The strap handle is from a much larger container than suggested by any of the hollow-ware pearl glazed sherds.

Given the glaze and body these sherds can be dated to within the range 1790 to 1840.

***Industrial slipware (ISW)***

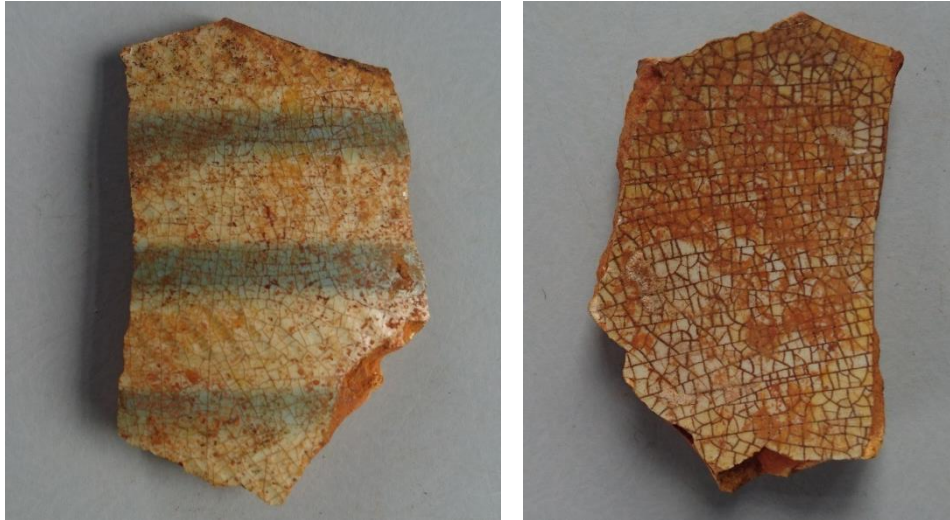
There are two sherds, very probably from the same vessel.

1968-0275D 15



Body sherd from a jug with parallel bands of blue slip applied over a white background; the white zones between have a diagonal rouletted design; the sherd which lay towards the upper shoulder of the jug, is very iron stained and in places encrusted with a rust-coloured deposit; the sherd is too stained to see whether it is pearlware or not [L=44].

1968-0275D 16



Body sherd from a jug with parallel bands of blue slip applied over a white background; the white zones between have a diagonal rouletted design; the sherd is too stained to see whether it is pearlware or not [L=44].

#### *Discussion*

This ware, also called 'factory-made slipware' is so described because of the use of machines, especially lathes in its production and decoration. A wide variety of techniques were employed including turning, dipping, banding, inlaying, rouletting and mocha, often in combination and dating from the late eighteenth century to well into the twentieth century (Sussman 1997, viii, 1-3). In Sussman's list of 118 documentary sources for the various types in the American market, rouletting, unfortunately is not mentioned. Banding occurs from 1797-1800 to 1912-26, and blue banding between 1836 and 1890 (Sussman 1997, 82-92).

Although blue horizontal banding is one of the longest-lived decorative types the two sherds from the HMS Racehorse site are likely to be in the earlier part of the production from around 1800 to 1840 as the use of rouletting, which added to the cost, had been abandoned by the middle of the century.

**Brown salt-glazed stoneware (BST)**

A single sherd was recovered.

1968-0269C 03



A body sherd from near the shoulder of a large flagon decorated with a single incised line around it; diameter at the centre of the sherd is 140mm and its thickness is 7mm [L=84mm].

*Discussion*

Flagons of this size and form were produced in a number of centres in Britain such as Bristol, Prescott, Liverpool and Buckley. The technology for producing them existed from the later eighteenth century but their *floruit* was the mid-to late-nineteenth. A group of production waste, found in Prescott, was being used as the foundation material for the walls of a row of houses built in 1830 (Hollis 1989). A number of complete examples in museum collections are stamped 'Catherall' who was a Buckley maker working from 1790 to 1850 (Davey 1975, no. 81). The Manx Museum has two almost complete examples in its collection which are similar to the sherd under consideration here. One is stamped EG&Co (MM 1984-6743d), thought to be from Bristol and the other stamped HAYES, a St Helen's potter working around 1890 (MM R-0938).

Given very little change in form between the earlier and later nineteenth century examples this sherd can be assigned a notional date range of 1820 to 1910.



### The glass

Nine fragments of glass are included in the collection in three different types.

The numbers of fragments (F) of the three types present and minimum vessels estimates (V) are as follows:

	F	V
<b>The glass</b>		
Bottle glass	7	4
Wine glass	1	1
Window glass?	1	1
	9	6

### Bottle glass

There are seven sherds of dark green bottle glass.

#### 1974-0251 17



Base sherd; diameter = 80mm; kick height = 39mm [L=73mm].

#### 1974-0251 18



Base sherd; diameter = 100mm; kick height = 25mm [L= 80mm].

1974-0251 **19**



Body sherd [L=34mm].

L21856/13 **53**



Body sherd [L=57mm].

L21856/72 54



Base sherd; octagonal sectioned bottle form; width = 60mm [L=78mm].

L21856/72 55



Rim sherd; diameter = 23mm [L=24mm]



L21856/103 59



Base sherd; diameter = 89mm [L=89mm].

#### *Discussion*

There are at least four vessels represented. Bottle glass of this general type was being produced from the later seventeenth until well into the nineteenth century. Initially blown into rounded forms, flatter bases with internal kicks and straight-sided forms were developed during the eighteenth century and were the norm in the nineteenth. They are difficult to date more precisely. In general, the bottles became narrower, their rims simpler and the kicks much less pronounced with time. Whilst the octagonal bottle is early to mid-nineteenth century in date, the other three bottles present might be as early as 1750 and as late as 1850. Their forms, especially the less pronounced kicks, suggest the latter part of this range.



***Wine glass***

1968-0275D 04



Wine glass stem with opaque twist and base of bowl; stem diameter is 12mm at the broken end and 18mm at its junction with the bowl [L=59].

***Discussion***

The technology for creating air twists in the stems of wine glasses was developed during the first part of the eighteenth century. This stem has a single opaque twist which is characteristic of Davis's fourth period of English eighteenth-century glass, dating from 1755 to 1780. He illustrates two examples, both dated to around 1760 with very similar twists and bowl base forms (Davis 1971, 94-5). Reference to the online catalogues of both the London and Ashmolean museums reveals many more of similar date, that is 1755 to 1770.

### ***Possible window glass***

L21856/13 **52**



Fragment of clear glass with all edges broken; there is a slight curvature on this small piece [L=29mm].

#### *Discussion*

This find could date to almost any period after the late seventeenth century when lead crystal was invented. The curvature may represent the wall of a vessel but might also have formed part of a port-light. Further research is needed to ascertain when glass was used in frames to cover port-holes.

#### **Discussion of the pottery and glass assemblage from the site**

Given the initial assumption that these finds derive from the wreck of HMS *Racehorse* in 1822, the ceramic and glass evidence suggests that several inter-related issues need to be brought together in this discussion: their location, their internal chronology and their possible relationship to HMS *Racehorse* and other known wrecks in the vicinity.

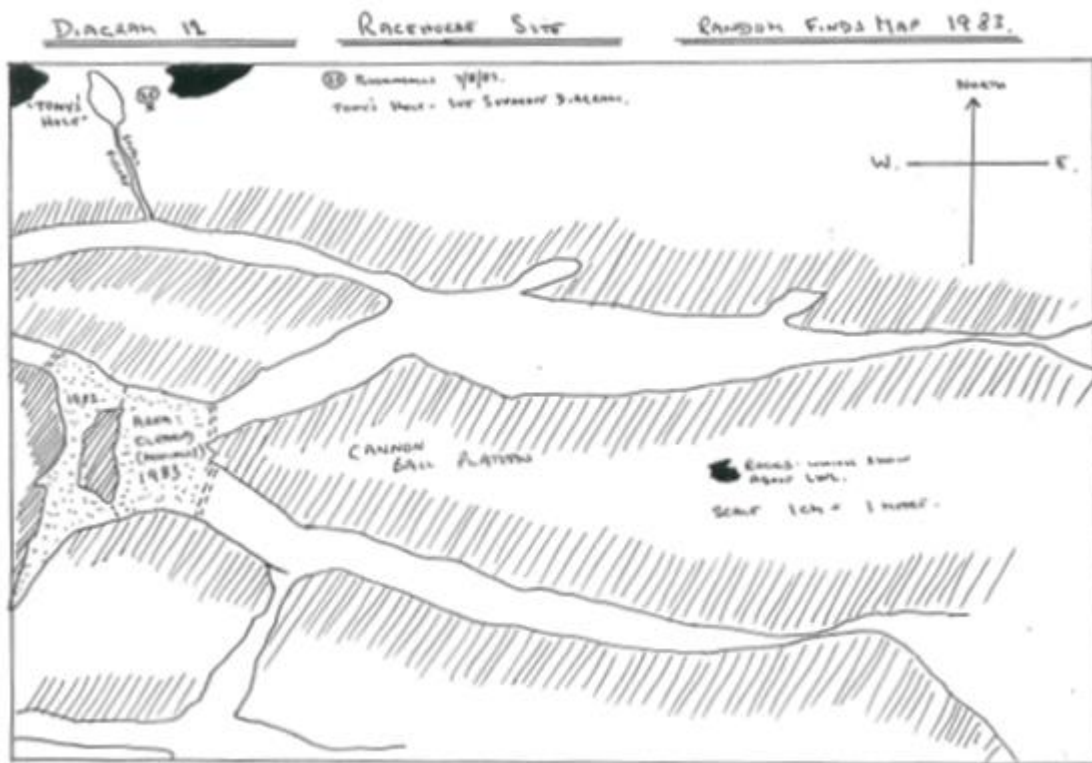
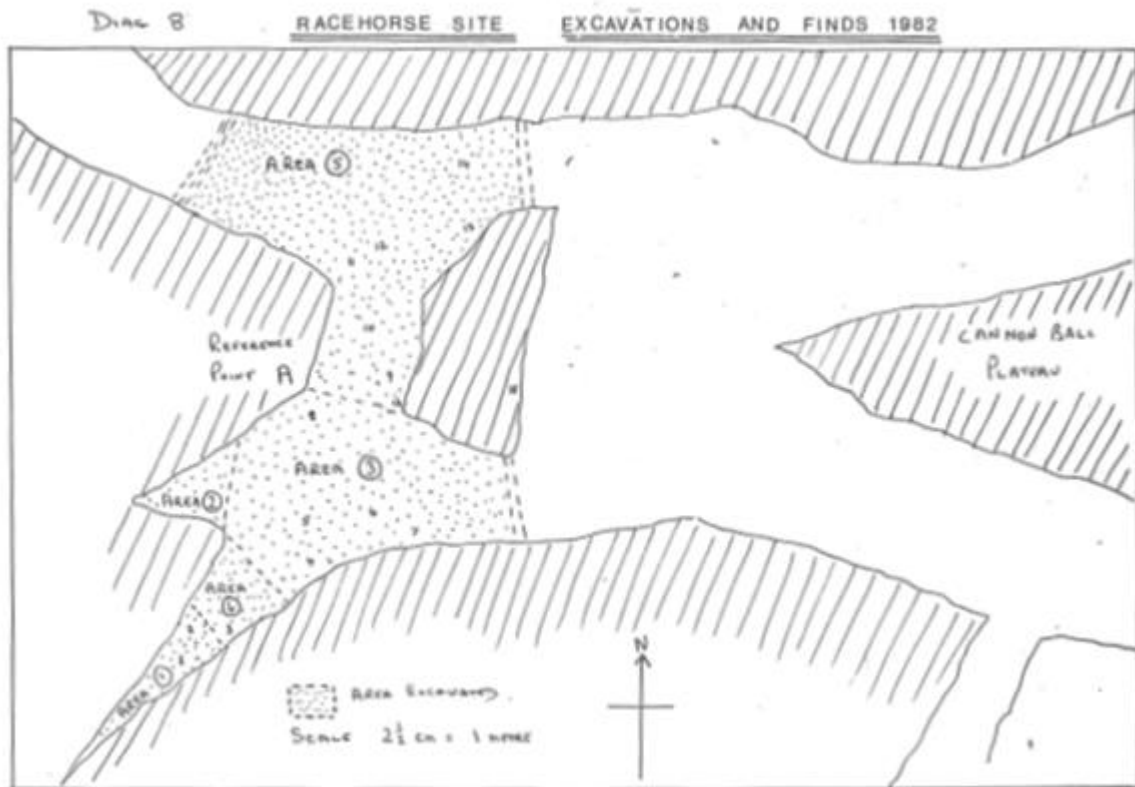
#### *The location*

The artefacts arrived in the Manx Museum in separate batches. Two large groups were deposited there by the Isle of Man Sub Aqua Club before the 1982 and 1983 excavations. First, in 1968, 20 sherds of pottery and one piece of glass were accessioned (1968-0269C and 1968-0275D). Then in 1974 a further seven sherds of pottery and three of glass were deposited (1974-0251). For these two groups which constitute almost half the assemblage from the site (31 out of 66 fragments) there is no locational information beyond the general record that they were found on the site of the wreck of HMS *Racehorse*.

For all the remainder, but for one unstratified and unlocated sherd (no. **60**), there are more specific locations.

The most important is the main gully, area 5 of the 1982 excavations, which produced 25 sherds of pottery and two pieces of glass (L21856/13). The excavated areas of the gully nos 1 to 5, all towards its western end, are shown on diagram 8 'excavations and finds 1982' with number 13 lying to the east side of the area. Then, there are two glass finds from 1983

whose position, more towards the centre of the main gully, is marked on diagram 11 of the report as 'excavations and finds 1983' (L21856/72).



Dives in 1984 produced a further five finds, four of pottery and one of glass (L21856/82, L21856/91 and L21856/103). These are described as coming from areas 6 and 7, neither of which appear on any site plan, but given the overall strategy being adopted, are likely to be to the east of areas 1 to 5 described on diagram 12 as ‘cleared partially 1983’.

*The internal chronology of the ceramics and glass*

These finds can be divided broadly into two groups: eighteenth and nineteenth -century. Not all can be dated more precisely than to this broad overall period, but most can be assigned to one of two much more closely datable groups. The first, dating within the range 1740 to 1770 but more particularly to the 1750s and 1760s. The second, dating from within the broad range 1810 to 1840, but more specifically to 1815 to 1830.

The minimum numbers of ceramic vessels present in the two groups is as follows:

<u>Group 1 1740-1770</u>		<u>Group 2 (1815-1830)</u>	
Tin-glazed earthenware (TGE)	1	White-bodied earthenware (WSE)	2
Press-moulded slipware (PMS)	1	Feather-edged blue (FEB)	2
White salt-glazed stoneware (WSS)	7	Blue transfer-printed ware (BTP)	7
Porcelain (POR)[but 1700-1800]	1	Industrial slipware (ISW)	1
		Pearlware (PER)	1
Total	10	Total	13

In addition, the dark, red-bodied earthenware (DRB) might belong to either group. The brown stoneware (BST) is likely to be intrusive but could just possibly date to as early as 1822.

The glass is more problematic. The wine glass stem should belong to group 1 and the octagonal sectioned bottle to group 2. But the other three bottles might belong to either period.

The other feature of these two groups is their relationship to the site’s geography. Group 1 is particularly restricted, all except one sherd (from area 6 in 1984) and the wine glass (1968-0275D) coming from area 5 in 1982 (L21856/13). The sets of finds accessioned in 1968 and 1974, for which there is no record of a specific location, do not contain any eighteenth-century ceramics. It is assumed that the rest of the pottery and glass was distributed over the site further to the east and the middle of the main gully and would have mirrored that of the ballast pigs, cannon balls and other artifacts.

DISCUSSION

There is an extensive literature dealing with underwater archaeology and its findings, not least in the *Journal of Nautical Archaeology*. Finds from excavated sites derive from a wide range of circumstances and contexts. At one extreme are the virtually closed groups recovered from within vessels that have themselves been wholly or partially recovered and raised to the surface. Well known examples include the *Mary Rose* which sank in the Solent in 1545 following an action against the French, the Swedish warship the *Vasa* that sank in



Stockholm harbour on her maiden voyage in 1628 and the *Vergulde Draeck* sunk off Western Australia in 1656. These vessels were time capsules and the artefacts from them are closely dated and well provenanced. At the other extreme, excavations around the Pomègues group of islands off Marseilles recovered many thousands of artefacts, including from wrecks, from the period in which this area served as a quarantine anchorage for ships wishing to enter the port, roughly 1680 to 1815. Although the artefact assemblages are very rich and informative about trading relations in and around the Mediterranean they cannot be tied to a specific vessel or period (Gosse 2007).

More commonly, as with HMS *Racehorse*, the sites of wrecks consist of a wide scatter of artefacts and distributed fragments of the vessel. In such cases the finds cannot be considered strictly as closed groups. For example the wreck of the Dutch merchantman the *Faam* wrecked on a sandbank just outside Poole Harbour in AD 1631 produced a wide range of finds almost all, including timbers subject to dendro-chronology, clearly dating from the period of the wreck (Friel 2017; Cousins 2018). These included a fine group of closely datable clay tobacco pipes probably made in Hoorn in North Holland. But four eighteenth-century tobacco pipes produced over a period of forty or fifty years from AD 1700 were also recovered. A similar picture can be seen in the finds from the Royal yacht *Mary* wrecked off Anglesey in 1675 (Tanner 2008). The large number of coins, the guns and other closely datable finds all fit well with a 1675 deposit (Bean 2008; Roth 2008). But the ceramic, glass and tobacco pipe assemblage whilst dominated by material of that date, also included eighteenth and nineteenth-century products (Davey and Longworth 2008). In both these cases the later finds have been interpreted as occasional loss by salvagers, looters or fishermen over a two hundred year period and not as components of a later wreck.

#### *The attribution of the finds to HMS Racehorse*

A majority of the finds including the ceramics and glass are entirely compatible with the 1822 date for the wreck. But at least ten of the ceramic vessels represented and one of the glass items date from Group 1, the mid-eighteenth century. Unlike the *Mary* or the *Faam* these finds are relatively closely dated and do not represent a depositional process taking a long period. And they pre-date the date of the wreck. Was all of this pottery and glass on board HMS *Racehorse* when she sank in 1822?

Although the loss of HMS *Racehorse* on the Skarranes is well documented and some of the artefacts from the site clearly derive from a naval vessel, it is difficult to comprehend a process which would have meant her carrying sets of eighteenth-century domestic tableware and glass which would have been around 50 years old at the time she was re-commissioned in 1818. It must be possible, however unlikely, that they were the personal possessions of the captain or one of the crew. But a much more probable explanation is that they derive from another wreck dating to the middle of the eighteenth century or just after, a suggestion made more likely given the geographical concentration of these finds.

Adrian Corkill kindly provided a list of known eighteenth-century wrecks in the Langness area:

1. Unknown in 1719.
2. Unknown in 1733.
3. **Flimby** on eighteenth March 1733. A galley from Workington. Collier.

4. Unknown in January 1744.
5. Unknown in March 1767. Cargo was tobacco.
6. **Active** on twentieth February 1773. Brig from Maryport. Collier.
7. Unknown on 13<sup>th</sup> October 1775. Welsh sloop from Beaumaris. Collier.
8. **Thomas** on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1782. From Whitehaven. Collier.
9. **Rawlinson** on 24<sup>th</sup> November 1794. Snow? from Lancaster. Built 1786. Bound for the West Indies.
10. **Bee** on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1795. Brig from Whitehaven. Built 1771 but 5<sup>th</sup> Bee since the original built in 1588. Collier.
11. **Hope** on 16<sup>th</sup> March 1798. Snow? from Workington. Built 1796. Collier.
12. **Die Frau Sophia** on 9<sup>th</sup> September 1798. Galliot from Flensburg (then Denmark now Germany). Built 1796. Bell at the Nunnery.
13. **Forrestor** on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1798. Brigantine from Whitehaven. Built 1763. Collier.
14. **Penelope** on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1799. Brig from Whitehaven. Built 1769. Collier.
15. A Prussian galliot wrecked eighteenth September 1801.

Of these the first four are certainly too early for the decorated salt-glazed stoneware vessels. Numbers 9 to 15 are too late, there being no material from that period present in the assemblage. This leaves numbers 5 to 8, for which the following locational information is known:

5. was at Dreswick Point.
6. was midway along Langness opposite the farm.
7. was Langness Point at a place referred to as 'Skillechoar'.
8. Langness but the dead crew were buried in the chapel on Fort Island suggesting that the wreck was in that vicinity.

Thus, the only real contender from the group of known eighteenth-century wrecks is that of the unknown Welsh sloop from Beaumaris wrecked on Langness Point on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October 1775. It is not known where Skillechoar is, but the Skarranes lie just off the point and may be what is referred to.

### Summary

The assemblage of pottery and glass from the site of HMS *Racehorse* imply two possible wrecks in the immediate vicinity of the main gully of the Skarranes. One, the larger and more distributed collection, is completely compatible with the 1822 date of the loss of HMS *Racehorse*. The other, slightly smaller and much more concentrated in area 5 of the gully, is consistent with the loss of the Beaumaris sloop in 1775.

### Further research

These initial conclusions should be tested in a number of ways:

1. All of the other finds from the site, many with more precise locations than the pottery and glass, need to be assessed by marine artefact specialists to see whether they, too, constitute chronologically distinct assemblages. The possibility of no 52 being a port-light should be further investigated.

2. Research in Bangor record office might provide further information about the 1775 wreck.
3. Research in the Pottery Museum, Stoke-on-Trent should provide more precise information about the designers and producers of the transfer-printed designs and their dating.

### **Caveat**

Once the research on the whole collection from the site is complete, it may well be that the conclusions reached here will require modification.

### **Acknowledgements**

The writer is very grateful to Adrian Corkhill for providing him with a list of known wrecks in the vicinity of the Racehorse. He is very happy to acknowledge access to the finds, help, advice and assistance given him throughout by Allison Fox, curator at Manx National Heritage. Thanks too to David Allwood and Philippa Tomlinson for reading and commenting on drafts of this paper.

### **Bibliography**

#### **Primary source**

*H.M. Brig Racehorse – excavation part 1 (1982) and part 2 (1983)*, Douglas: Brian King papers in Manx National Heritage Library, MS 14868.

#### **Secondary sources**

Amery A and Davey P J 1979, 'Post-medieval pottery from Brookhill, Buckley, Clwyd', *Medieval and Later Pottery in Wales*, **2**, 49-85.

Britton F 1987, *London Delftware*, London: Jonathon Horne.

Cousins T 2018, *Swash Channel Wreck Conservation Statement and Management Plan*, Bournemouth: Bournemouth University.

Davey P 1975, *Buckley pottery*, Buckley: Buckley Clay Industries Research Committee.

Davey P J 2002, 'Pottery' in D J Freke *Excavations on St Patrick's Isle Peel, Isle of Man, 1982-88 prehistoric, Viking, medieval and later*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 363-427.

Davey P J and Longworth C M 2008, 'The ceramic and glass assemblage from the royal yacht Mary' in M Tanner, *Royal yacht Mary: the discovery of the first royal yacht*, Liverpool: Board of Trustees of the National Museums and galleries on Merseyside, 89-94.

Davey P J and Longworth C 2016 'Terre cuite à glaçure noire britannique' in Métreau L (ed) *Identifier la céramique au Québec*, Québec: Centre interuniversitaire d'études sur les lettres, les arts et les traditions (CELAT), 137-143. Davis D C 1971, *Glass for collectors*, London: Hamlyn.

Davis D C 1971, *Glass for collectors*, London: Hamlyn.

Ewins N 1997, "Supplying the present wants of our Yankee cousins...." *Staffordshire ceramics and the American market 1775-1880*, Stoke-on-Trent: City Museum and Art gallery, *Journal of Ceramic History* volume 15.

Godden G A 1974, *British pottery: an illustrated guide*, London: Barrie & Jenkins.

Halfpenny P A 1986, 'Catalogue', in T A Lockett and P A Halfpenny, *Creamware and pearlware: the fifth exhibition from the Northern ceramic Society*, Stoke-on-Trent: City Museum and Art Gallery, 63-106.

- Friel I 2017, *Lost property: identifying the seventeenth-century Swash Channel wreck*, <https://www.ianfriel.co.uk/lost-property-identifying-seventeenth-century-swash-channel-wreck/> posted March 2017.
- Holdway P 1986, 'Techniques of transfer-printing on cream coloured earthenware' in in T A Lockett and P A Halfpenny, *Creamware and pearlware: the fifth exhibition from the Northern ceramic Society*, Stoke-on-Trent: City Museum and Art Gallery, 20-3.
- Gosse P 2007, *Les pipes de la quarantaine: fouilles du port antique de Pomègues*, Oxford : British Archaeological Reports, International Series 1590.
- Green J N 1977, *The loss of the Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie jacht Vergulde Draeck, Western Australia 1656: an historical background and excavation report with an appendix on similar loss of the fluit Lastdrager*, Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, Supplementary Series 36.
- Hollis M 1987, '44-50 Derby Street, Prescott, Merseyside (Site 5)', *Journal of the Merseyside Archaeological Society*, 5, (1982-83), 35-7.
- Hunter and Miller 1994, 'English shell-edged earthenware', *Antiques*, March, 441-443.
- Jackson R 1999, *The Origin and Development of the Seventeenth-Century Tin-Glazed Earthenware Industry in Brislington and Bristol*, MLitt, University of Bristol and online <https://www.bristolpottersandpotteries.org.uk/brislington-pottery/chapter-2/>
- Jennings S 1981, *Eighteen centuries of pottery from Norwich*, Norwich: East Anglian Archaeology Report No. 13.
- Kelly J H 1969, *The Hill Top site, Burslem*, City of Stoke on Trent Museum Archaeological Society report no 3.
- King B and Goodwins S 2022, *The wreck of the Racehorse*, Maughold: Loaghtan Books.
- Labonté-Leclerc M and Léouffre D 2016a, 'Pearlware' in L Métreau (ed), *Identifier la céramique au Québec*, Québec: Centre interuniversitaire d'études sur les lettres, les arts et les traditions (CELAT), 231-5.
- Labonté-Leclerc M and Léouffre D 2016b, 'Whiteware' in L Métreau (ed), *Identifier la céramique au Québec*, Québec: Centre interuniversitaire d'études sur les lettres, les arts et les traditions (CELAT), 237-44.
- Lewis J, Heywood R and Howard-Davis C 2011, *Bewsey Old Hall, Warrington, Cheshire: excavations 1977-81 and 1983-5*, Lancaster: Oxford Archaeology North.
- Longworth C and Davey P 2016, 'Terre cuite engobée et glaçurée britannique mise en forme par moulage' in L Métreau (ed), *Identifier la céramique au Québec*, Québec: Centre interuniversitaire d'études sur les lettres, les arts et les traditions (CELAT), 167-71.
- Marsden P (ed) 2009, *Mary Rose - your noblest shippe: anatomy of a Tudor warship*, Portsmouth: Mary Rose Trust, *The archaeology of the Mary Rose*, 2.
- Miller G L 1980, 'Classification and economic scaling of nineteenth century ceramics', *Historical Archaeology*, 14, 1-40.
- Miller G L, Samford P, Shlasko E and Madsen A 2000, 'Telling time for archaeologists', *Northeast Historical Archaeology*, 29, 1-22.
- Mountford A R 1971, *Staffordshire saltglazed stoneware*, London: Barrie & Jenkins.
- Sussman L 1997, *Mocha, banded, cat's eye, and other factory-made slipware*, Boston: Studies in Northeast Historical Archaeology, 1.
- Tanner M 2008, *Royal yacht Mary: the discovery of the first royal yacht*, Liverpool: Board of Trustees of the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside.
- Watney B 1963, *English blue and white porcelain of the eighteenth century*, London: Faber and Faber Ltd.



