

Brislington Community Museum News

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Following on...

...from our previous newsletter, which explored the wide variety of non-ceramic materials from the 18th and 19th centuries found in Brislington.

This issue looks at some 19th and 20th century pottery and a range of other materials from the 20th century.

Ken Taylor, chair

Contact us

Email us - secretary@brislington.org - to enquire about any of our community museum's exhibits, to provide feedback or new information etc about them, or to contribute items for this newsletter. We aim to produce this quarterly, but our schedule is flexible so we can react quickly to urgent important events (also, during quiet times we can focus on other matters such as out-reach activities and sourcing and researching new exhibits).



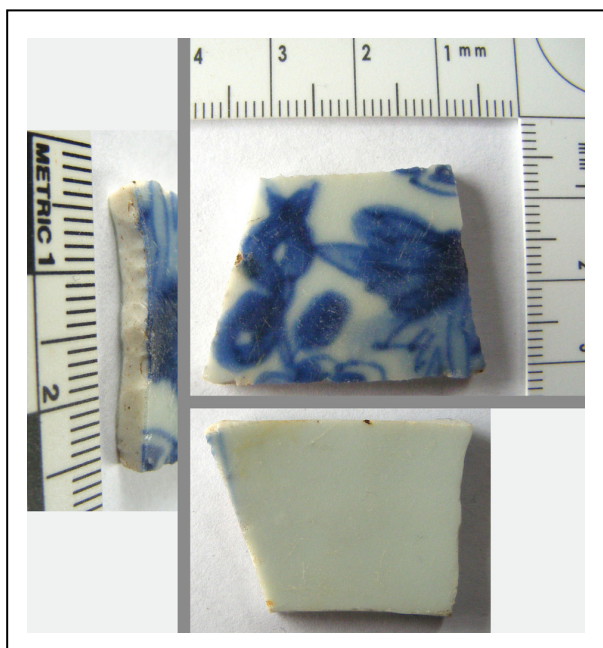
Bronze plaque with inscription (see page 9)

19th and 20th century ceramics

Porcelain

There are many sorts of pottery, and one of the more recent developments is porcelain, whose high firing temperature was difficult to create and control (the technique originated in China).

Sherds of porcelain are most easily identified by their edges, which have a glassy lustre rather than the dull clay fabric of ordinary pottery. In porcelain the clay has been vitrified - literally turned to glass - by the intense heat in the kiln.



This example of a blue and white floral pattern has the characteristic fuzzy edges of Flow Blue where the blue cobalt has spread out into the glaze during firing. British potters trying to emulate the crisp patterns of Chinese porcelain regarded such flowing as a defect, but it actually achieved some popularity in the 19th century as it lent a misty ambience to the painted scenes, redolent of the mysterious Orient.

Find spot: Eastwood Farm, Brislington, ST 6371
Exhibit contributed by Dave Setter & Rod Webb
Acquisition number: 120224a8

Jam jar

Probably 19th century, or early 20th. Note the groove around the rim where the fabric 'lid' would be tied on. Impressed on the base is a monogram that could be read as FMF, and the words: 'POT MADE IN ENGLAND'.

Find spot: Hampstead Road, Brislington, Bristol.
ST 612710

Exhibit contributed by Ken Taylor

Acquisition number: 100807a1



Marble

This carefully shaped ball of fired clay is something of a mystery. It may simply have been a toy - a marble - created on a whim, but the colours of the clay match other finds at the site that were kiln furniture in the clay tobacco pipe industry. So, perhaps this object too had a role in the manufacture process. A chip on the surface (slightly above centre on the left hand image) shows the colouration is not superficial, but runs throughout the fabric of the sphere.



Having seen the exhibit in our virtual museum, archaeologist Noel Boothroyd kindly contacted us, saying the sphere "...definitely is a marble, we found quite a few on domestic sites in Stoke, probably by-products (unofficial?) of the pottery industry (or in this case clay pipe factory)."

Perhaps the chip occurred during firing the clay in the kiln, and this may explain why it was found amongst the waste products: it wouldn't roll properly in a game of marbles. It's nice to think though, that workers in the potteries from Bristol to Stoke-on-Trent were finding ways to bring a little extra happiness home.

Find spot: Hampstead Road, Brislington, Bristol. ST 612710

Exhibit contributed by Ken Taylor

Acquisition number: 120226a1

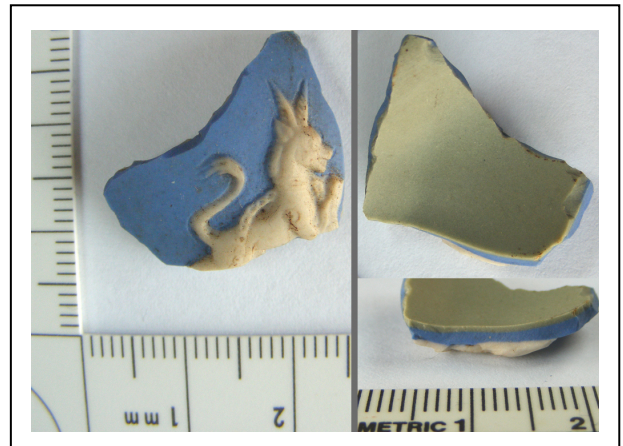
Jasperware

Usually associated with the pottery manufacturer Wedgewood, this stoneware has a characteristic matte surface on which is overlaid with an embossed decoration (usually white). This sherd may be from a small ornamental vase bearing a coat of arms depicting an antelope (such as that of Manchester City Council).

Find spot: Hampstead Road, Brislington, Bristol. ST 612710

Exhibit contributed by Ken Taylor

Acquisition number: 120226a2



Fry's canteen cup

This cup (from a cup-and-saucer set) has its handle broken away, and came from the canteen of the former Fry (later Cadbury) chocolate factory at Keynsham.

Eric Miles (local author, steam engine enthusiast, and expert on Keynsham's Fry factory) informs us this cup "was manufactured by Pountney at their Fishponds works.

"The logo is the standard one used on their Sentinel Steam Waggons as well as on the Sentinel Shunter. It depicts the factory from the Keynsham - Willsbridge road. The Power House chimney and A Block (although too many floors) with a bit of artistic licence showing two mounds and trees with the factory in between."



Inner diameter of lip 69mm
Outer diameter of lip 75mm
Diameter of base 50mm
Height 72mm

Blue transfer print on the upper part of the outside, facing a right-handed drinker:

FRY
SOMERDALE
CANTEEN

The text (sans serif font) is centred in a rectangular image (26mm high by 34mm wide) bordered on right and left by delicate rosettes resembling trees. In the centre, nestling beyond two hills, is a glimpse revealing five storeys of the Fry chocolate factory. The word SOMERDALE is enclosed in a scroll.

Green transfer print on base:

Bristol
POUNTNEY ??????
MADE IN ??????
????????????????

The word Bristol is in an italic script, the rest is in a sans serif font.

Find spot: Near the Hill Lawn entrance to Nightingale Valley (ST62047141).

Exhibit contributed by Ken Taylor
Text written by Ken Taylor
Photographer: Kai Taylor
Acquisition number: 180629a1

Kiln furniture

There are few things as personal as a fingerprint, and this piece of fired clay carries the impression of two.

It was found with dozens of similar pieces that were used in the kilns during the firing of clay tobacco pipes. Hundreds of fragments of unused pipe stems and bowls were also found at the site. The pipes date to the Victorian era, yet the land had no industrial use at that time, so the assemblage of manufacturing waste must have been brought to the site.

Find spot: Hampstead Road, Brislington, Bristol. ST 612710

Exhibit contributed by Ken Taylor
Acquisition number: 120224b1



Glass bottles

Beer bottle

A little old rubbish dump on the western slope of Nightingale Valley has been so thoroughly trawled through by people looking for curios, that nothing of value remains. What is left is sufficient to the archaeologist looking only for information rather than saleable items or trophies.

The left hand bottle reads W J ROGERS Limited Bristol. W J Rogers was a brewery based in the Old Market/Jacob Street area, and is thought to have operated from around the middle of the 19th century until 1935 when it was taken over by Simonds.

The writing on the other bottle is sadly incomplete and only reads TRADE MARK BRISTOL. However, the logo is very distinct (an X shape apparently composed of two bottles, each with a large O in the middle).

Find spot: Nightingale Valley, Brislington. ST 619715

Exhibit contributed by Ken Taylor

Acquisition number: 100911a1



Clear glass

A cache of bottles included two that probably contained ink for fountain pens etc. The cross-section of the bottle on the left is circular, while the other is octagonal.



There were also three phials of indeterminate function in the assemblage.

Six other bottles have raised lettering. Advertisements for such products (e.g. Edwards and Bismag) date to the early 1920s.



Raised lettering on the bottles read (left to right):

CROSSMITH
& SONS
PERFUMERS
LONDON
(oval cross-section)

BISURATED
MAGNESIA
BISMAG LTD
LONDON
(circular)

EIFFEL TOWER
LEMONADE
FOSTER CLARK LTD
MAIDSTONE
(square)

EDWARDS'
"UZON"
BRILLIANTINE
(square)

PASCALL
LONDON
(circular)

REEVES
LONDON
(circular)

The lemonade bottle would have contained crystals to which the consumer would have added water to make their own drinks.

Find spot: Whitby Road, Brislington. ST 6172
Exhibits contributed by Doreen Lindegaard
Acquisition number (ink bottles): 100907a3
Acquisition number (phials): 100907a2
Acquisition number (bottles): 100907a1



Stone

This deeply carved freestone (probably Bath Stone) block measures 42cm on its longest side (the back), and is 21cm wide and 25cm deep. It was found around 1980 among a slew of discarded items in Nightingale Valley, and so has no archaeological context. It is believed to have been discarded from a stonemason's yard in the mid-20th century.

The carvings may depict representations of real vegetation, such as hops, although the large flower with six petals may simply be a stylised flower with no specific species in mind.

The lower of the two views shows two straight lines that frame the carving. These are thought to be guidelines used by the mason to indicate the parts of the stone that would eventually be embedded in a wall or ceiling.

Find spot: Nightingale Valley, Brislington, Bristol. ST 619715

Exhibit contributed by Tony Souter

Photographer: Dawn Witherspoon

Acquisition number: 110515a1



Biological remains

Animal bones often require a specialist to identify them, and can help identify the habitat in the vicinity of the find spot.



Because different types of snail live in different habitats, their shells can tell us about the environment itself. The three long, narrow shells were found in a layer of turf, while the three circular shells were found in a void left by a decayed tree root or buried log. The central oval was found in the same void and is an egg case.

Find spot: Hampstead Road, Brislington, Bristol. ST 612710

Exhibits contributed by Ken Taylor

Acquisition number (bones): 120302a4

Acquisition number (shells etc): 120302a



Metal

Finger ring

With its mask-like face, this ring was certainly eye-catching. The hoop of the ring is split, allowing it to be opened up to fit a wide variety of finger sizes.

The type of metal is uncertain but there are traces of verdigris, so a copper alloy is likely; and patches remain of a bright silvery metal plating which would have enhanced its dramatic appearance. Similar items of costume jewellery were popular in and around the 1970s.



Find spot: Hampstead Road, Brislington, Bristol. ST 612710

Exhibit contributed by Ken Taylor
Acquisition number: 120226a5

Badge / brooch

This badge or brooch looks homemade and was perhaps made by an itinerant craftsman at a travelling fair. The central initial in the shield is the letter M - possibly the initial of a sweetheart.



The pendant is made from a single length of wire (probably steel) with a square cross-section; the pin is of the same metal but circular.

Find spot: Eastwood Farm, Brislington, ST 6371
Exhibit contributed by Dave Setter & Rod Webb
Acquisition number: 120224a1

BTCCL button

The lettering on this button - BTCCL - stands for Bristol Tramways and Carriage Company Ltd. This form of the company name was in use from 1887 to 1957. This company is associated with what used to be a Tram Depot at the junction of Bath Road (A4) and Sandy Park Road.

The writing on the back reads MADE IN ENGLAND SWORD MAKE TRADE MARK, and bears a logo of crossed swords. The dome of this apparently brass button is hollow. Bright traces of gold in protected parts of the lettering suggest it was originally gilt.

Find spot: Hampstead Road, Brislington, Bristol. ST 611712

Exhibit contributed by Ken Taylor
Acquisition number: 120226a3



Bronze plaque

The copper alloy plaque illustrated on page 1 bears the initials BBF in capital letters.

With three corners of the plaque intact, we can be confident this is all that was originally written on it. There is no trace of the letters on the back of the object, so it seems likely the letters were punched onto a flat bronze plate.

Find spot: Eastwood Farm, Brislington, ST 6371
 Exhibit contributed by Dave Setter & Rod Webb
 Acquisition number: 120224a5

Toy car

This Matchbox model of a Mercedes-Benz 300E in the livery of a German police car, was made in Thailand in 1986. At that time the property where it was found was owned by the Avon & Somerset Police Authority - a purpose-built home for the family of a police officer.

We can only guess at this toy's role in the family, but it reminds us that in archaeology we're dealing with the hopes and dreams, and joys and fears, of both adults and of children.

Find spot:
 Hampstead
 Road,
 Brislington,
 Bristol. ST
 612710
 Exhibit
 contributed
 by Kai Taylor
 Acquisition
 number:
 110521a3



Cartridge case - WWI

This First World War necked, rimless cartridge is 57mm long with a mouth of 8mm, and was fired. The headstamp (the writing on the base) reads DM / 4 / 16 / S67. This tells us it was manufactured at Deutsche Munitionsfabriken (Karlsruhe/Berlin, Germany) in April 1916, and once contained a spitzer (pointed) bullet, and that the cartridge case is an alloy of 67% copper and 33% zinc. Typical use of this sort of cartridge would be in a Mauser Model 1888 bolt-action rifle, issued to the infantry.

Find spot: Hampstead Road, Brislington, Bristol.
 ST 612710
 Exhibit contributed by Ken Taylor
 Photographer: Kai Taylor (headstamp)
 Acquisition number: 100808a4



Cartridge case - WW2

The crimped top of this British .303 rifle cartridge shows it is a 'blank', or training round, that never carried a bullet. The headstamp (writing on the base) indicates dates it to the Second World War.

The primer (the central disc in the base) has not been dented by a firing pin, and the crimping has not been opened out by the explosion of hot gases, indicating the round was live and potentially dangerous when it was found in the garden of a private home, but it was promptly made safe under professional guidance.

Find spot: Hampstead Road, Brislington, Bristol.
ST 612710

Exhibit contributed by Ken Taylor

Acquisition number: 100808a5



.22 Calibre

Some .22 calibre bullets and cartridge cases were found near a building that was formerly used as a firing range for target practise. The copper alloy 'long case' cartridge (which has the headstamp of the manufacturer ICI - Imperial Chemical Industries) is typically for a rifle, and would have fired a lead like the one illustrated above it. The 'short case' (with the headstamp U - Remington Arms Company) would have fired a smaller lead from a pistol. The bullet pictured above this case has mushroomed on impact. The waisted pellet is from an air gun, which uses compressed air rather than a chemical explosion to propel the bullet.

Find spot: Hampstead Road, Brislington, Bristol.
ST 612710

Exhibit contributed by Ken Taylor

Acquisition number: 120302a5



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