

occur in two areas where igneous and metamorphic rocks also outcrop: in the Cotentin peninsula at its southern end and to the south-east of Brittany, in the area bounded by Rennes, Nantes and Angers (Giot and Querre 1986, Fig 2). Of these two, the first is an area of granitic rocks whereas the second includes areas of metamorphic rocks. Within this area, a medieval pottery workshop, St Jean-la-Poterie, just west of Redon, is known to have been producing micaceous, spicule-bearing fabrics. Petrological descriptions and photo-micrographs of products of this kiln are very similar to those of the Chepstow vessel, although rounded quartzose sand is not mentioned.

Provisionally, therefore, a south-eastern Breton source is suggested for the Chepstow vessel, quite possibly St Jean-la-Poterie, near Redon at the junction of the Vilaine and the Oust. The main port on the Vilaine is La Roche Bernard.

Note by Jeremy Knight

The obvious Breton connection along that stretch of the coast is the salt trade but salt is of course the classic archaeologically invisible export. The main salt port was La Rochelle, further south, but there were others, including Noirmoutier at the mouth of the Loire. This was an important trading centre in the 7th century and in the 19th. There are references for Noirmoutier and the salt trade in *The End of Antiquity* (Knight, 1999, 159-61). There were a number of medieval salt ports along that coast and there are entries for ships from La Rochelle in the Chepstow port books (Dawson, 1932). References

to salt may not be included, since only goods on which custom dues were levied were listed. According to the *The Blue Guide* (Muirhead, 1958, 215) La Roche Bernard was a medieval port and a post-medieval centre of shipbuilding, so it sounds the right sort of place.

The other Breton-South Wales link in the 14th century was the Hundred Years War, but this is a less likely context. Most of the Gwent nobles of that time fought in north France and Brittany and the earlier phases of Raglan Castle show very strong Breton-north French influence. Another medieval Breton sherd is a piece of *ceramique onctueuse* from Dover Castle – a single sherd, associated with Saintonge polychrome (Hodges, 1978).

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A MEDIEVAL POTTERY KILN SITE AT NEWCASTLE EMLYN, DYFED

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Introduction

In 1993 excavations (by DM) for a patio wall in the garden of Heulwen Deg, Blaenwern, Newcastle Emllyn (SN 305 405), revealed layers of charcoal and pottery kiln waste. There was also a curving line of very coarse 'kiln bricks'.

In 2004 a small team from Monmouth Archaeological Society and West Wales Archaeology re-opened part of the original excavation and confirmed that there was an undisturbed deposit of kiln waste on the site and that it was likely that the upper parts of a kiln had been exposed (Fig 1). The re-opened excavation stopped at the surface of the *in situ* remains and was then backfilled for future study.

Medieval pottery kilns are rare in Wales (AW 43, 13-8)

and this is the first to be recognised to the west of Caerleon in Gwent. The kiln excavated by Mortimer Wheeler at Newport, Pembrokeshire, in the 1920s (Talbot 1968) is probably of early post-medieval date.

Pottery with similar inclusions to those from the Newcastle Emllyn kiln site has been found on many sites in south-west and west Wales and it has acquired various names, including Gwbert Ware, Dyfed Gravel-Tempered ware, Cardigan Fabric 6 and Carmarthen Fabrics A2 and A4. The fabric has been found in 12th-century contexts, but the Newcastle Emllyn material is probably of 13th-century date. The fabric was first defined by Cathy O'Mahoney (O'Mahoney 1985).

The Site

Heulwen Deg, Blaenwern, is situated to the south-west of the historic core of Newcastle Emllyn over the River Teifi on what was probably waste ground. There are clay pits on the banks of the river to the east of the site and the nearby river sands and gravels are identical to the temper found in the pottery and 'kiln bricks'.

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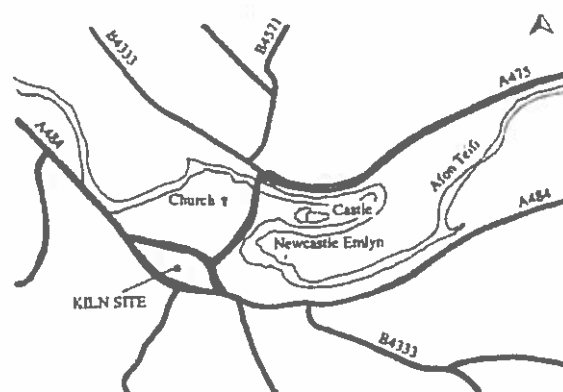


Fig 1: Site Location

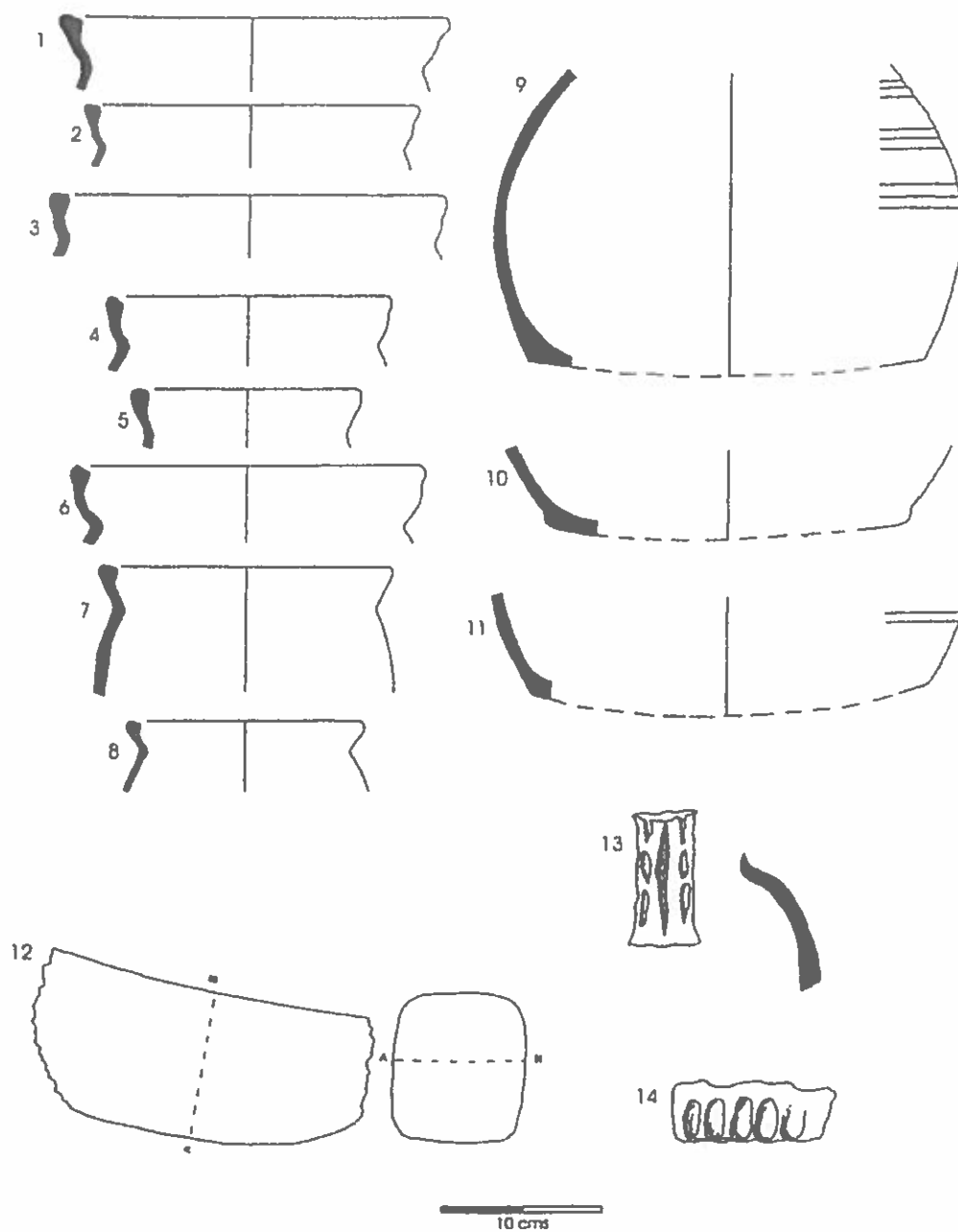


Fig 2: Pottery and Kiln Brick

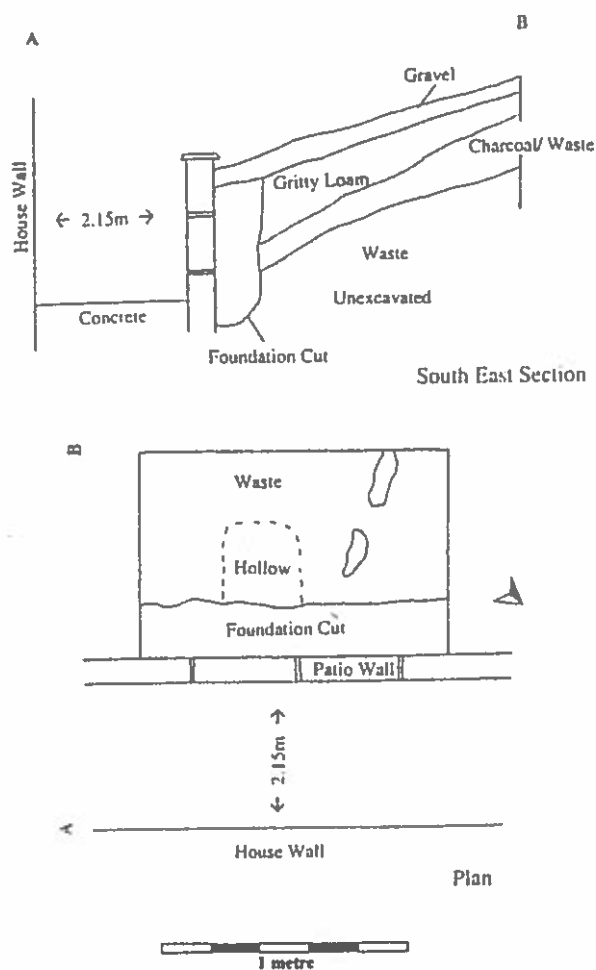


Fig 3: Kiln Site Section and Plan

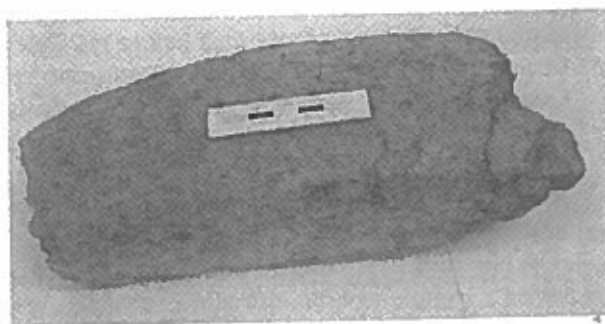


Fig 4: Kiln Brick

The Fabric

The fabric varies between the jugs, cooking pots and kiln bricks – mostly in the percentage and size of the inclusions. The temper of the Newcastle Emlyn pottery is finer than that from many other south-west Wales sites and cannot be called 'gravel-tempered' although the inclusions are probably of a common origin with the coarser tempered wares from elsewhere.

The inclusions are dominated by sedimentary Ordovician siltstones and mudstones with some quartz and fine-grained sandstones. Most of the inclusions are rounded, although some of the quartz grains are sub-



Fig 5: Kiln Brick and Cooking Pot Fabric

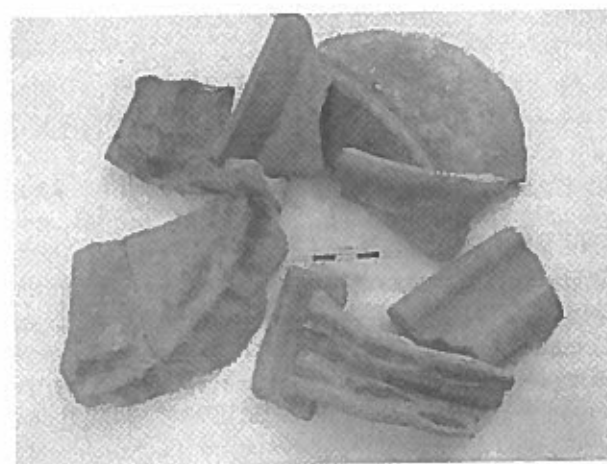


Fig 6: Pottery

rounded, while all are matched by material sampled on the banks of the River Teifi.

The Products (Fig 2)

The pottery assemblage is comparatively small and is unlikely to be an exhaustive sample of the kiln products or of the percentages of the products represented. In total, 351 sherds were recovered, as follows: 30 rims (cooking pots); 7 sagging bases; 14 flat bases; 1 glazed handle; 292 body sherds and 1 nearly complete kiln brick and 4 fragments.

The Jugs. (Fig 2, 13-14)

Only a few jug sherds were recovered. They are fairly hard-fired under a green lead glaze. A strap handle with vertical knife slashes and a thumb base were also found but a full vessel profile was not obtained.

The inclusions are sparse and finest in the jugs, where they are generally below 0.5mm in size and amount to around 3% of the body make-up.

The totally oxidised jug sherds (where the glaze has not flashed) are the same colours as the cooking pots: Munsell red 2.5YR 6/8 with light red surfaces 2.5YR 7/6. The reduced and hard-fired (properly glazed) jug sherds are Gley gray 5/- with interior surfaces of a light reddish brown 5YR 6/4.

The Cooking Pots (Fig 2, 1-11)

These are far coarser than the jugs although the inclusions are still small, being mostly below 1.0mm in size and with occasional fragments up to 2.0mm. One exceptional sub-rounded quartz grain is 4.0mm across. The inclusions total around 10% of the body. The Munsell colour is red, 2.5YR 6/8, with light red surfaces, 2.5YR 7/6.

The Kiln Bricks. (Fig 2, 12)

These are very coarse, with inclusions forming probably 50% of the body. The rounded shale and siltstones are commonly 10.0mm in size but can be 20.0mm across. Quartz is rare but there are a few grains of up to 2.5mm. The core of the bricks are Munsell 10R 5/8 red with gray

surfaces of 7.5YR 5/1.

Acknowledgements

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HOLLOWAYS IN THE WELSH BORDER

David Bick¹

INTRODUCTION

This report is based on extensive fieldwork during the past two decades. It is largely a response to the Royal Commission's concern at the lack of recording and study of the commonest linear earthwork in the Principality, the holloway or sunken road (RCAHMW 1982, 347). It also shows the potential for new approaches to the subject of landscape history.

Holloways are a profound enigma. The more they are pondered and examined the more the anomalies arise, and yet at the same time the feeling grows that clues to the past lie here which no other source can reveal (Bick 1984). The effects of geology, population and traffic, where holloways occur and where they do not, are beyond the scope of the present paper; but more important than all the details is the simple fact that they are there.

Holloways are usually attributed to wear from usage, and erosion due to the elements. Other factors were scraping the surface for its manure, and when a flaggy base supplied occasional needs for stone. But although in soft strata the deepening can be quite rapid, a great deal of evidence suggests that in general it was extremely slow, especially in districts of low population and rocky terrain typical of the Welsh Marches.

My purpose is to describe a number of examples, mainly in the Old Red Sandstone of Eastern Gwent and the foothills of the Black Mountains where rainfall is heavy. It is also to draw attention to inferences which inevitably arise, including the antiquity of such trackways as lines of communication, and the implications concerning enclosure or management of land from very remote times.

It seems that the earliest tracks slowly evolved in piecemeal fashion into a network suited to the needs of

a population gradually abandoning a nomadic lifestyle. Longer distance routes such as ridgeways defined by natural features, and others with a definite sense of direction often arose, but at what stage it is impossible to say. A good example is the line of holloways from Monmouth Cap (SO 395 263) along Campston Hill towards Abergavenny, and long since superseded by a turnpike alongside. However, the overall pattern is in striking contrast to the straight and purposeful roads surveyed and constructed by the Roman conquerors.

In recent years a variety of books involving roads and tracks reflect the public interest, but unfortunately much nonsense has been penned concerning holloways. Dates are frequently ascribed to a medieval or Roman period as if they had been created anew at the time, but only reflect the outcome of muddled thinking. It never occurs to the authors that each began merely as a path at surface, which perhaps endured for centuries before a sunken profile developed.

Before tarmacadam arrested their evolution, holloways resembled a living organism, ever slowly changing and enlarging, and thus the concept of age is meaningless unless measured from an agreed starting point. The ultimate aim is to discover when a route really began as just a path at surface, whether or not first trodden by animals or man perhaps centuries or even millennia before.

In more detail, whereas a disused road at surface would soon be lost without trace, like an ancient earthwork the testimony of a holloway becomes frozen within the landscape. For instance, when blocked by an Iron Age earthwork its state at that period is preserved, providing a vital yardstick in the time-scale of development. Example: where Roman Roads have obstructed holloways occur at Woolaston and Highfield, Lydney (Trotter 1936, 7; Har 1967, 21). Thomas Codrington also gave several examples (Codrington 1928), and a sunken way full of Bronze Age

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