



NEWSLETTER

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Autumn/Winter 1996

# CLAY TOBACCO PIPES FROM EXCAVATIONS NEAR RUSHEN ABBEY, BALLASALLA, ISLE OF MAN, 1996

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A series of trial trenches were excavated as part of an archaeological evaluation in a car park to the north-west of Rushen Abbey, Ballasalla, in 1996. The work was carried out by the Liverpool University Field Archaeology Unit and the finds will be deposited in the Manx Museum, Douglas. During this work four fragments of clay tobacco pipe were recovered as follows:

*Trench A, lower layer:* 1 stem fragment opening out into a spurless bowl (Fig.19.1). This would have been a short-stemmed or 'cutty' pipe, the surviving bowl of which does not show any signs of decoration. The stem has the incuse moulded mark D.MILLER/LIVERPOOL on the stem. The mark is unusual in that the maker's name is in serif lettering while the place name is sans serif. This might suggest that the stylistically later sans serif lettering had been replaced at some point. This would be quite possible since the lettering was usually stamped with a steel punch into a copper or brass strip which was set into a cast iron mould. This enabled the lettering to be easily replaced if it became worn or needed to be changed. There is a faint incuse line flanking the lettering on both sides of the stem which marks the edge of the inserted strip. The pipe can be identified as a product of the firm of David Miller & Co who first appear in Gore's Liverpool directory for 1860 when they were working at 18 and 20 Seel Street. In 1864 David Miller was listed at 10 Seel Street and 15 Gradwell Street while in 1870 it was 18 Seel Street and 15 Gradwell Street. Given the unreliability of directory entries it is quite possible that the Seel Street number was incorrectly printed in 1864. Oswald (1975, 179) lists David Miller in a directory of 1874, but the firm was not listed in the 1900 directory. On present evidence this piece can therefore be dated to between 1860 and 1874. A similar stem with incuse moulded serif lettering reading D.MILL[ER]/[LIV]ERPOOL was recovered in 1995 from the topsoil during excavations at Crawyn Brooghs, Ballaugh, on the Isle of Man.

*Trench A, lower layer:* 1 plain stem fragment of 19th-century date.

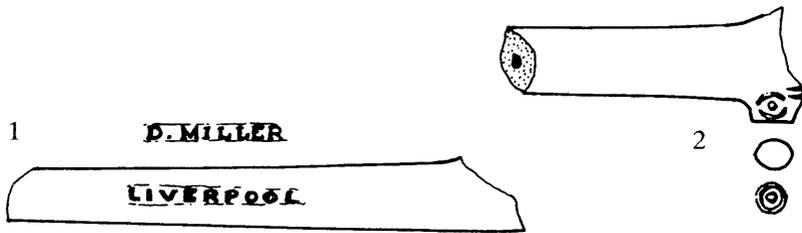


Fig.19.1-2 Stem and bowl from Rushen Abbey, Ballasalla, Isle of Man.

*Trench C, upper layer:* 1 bowl fragment from a heel pipe (**Fig.19.2**). The heel has a relief moulded symbol on each side and has been trimmed quite short. There are traces of fluted decoration surviving on the bowl; the form of the decoration is typical of late 18th or early 19th-century pipes from the north-west which often had flutes along the seam facing away from the smoker but some other decorative motif on the sides of the bowl. The trimming of the heel is a technique which died out early in the 19th century and so this piece can be dated to the period *c.*1780-1820.

*Trench C, upper layer:* 1 mouthpiece fragment of cylindrical section but with a simple nipple type end. This form of mouthpiece is characteristic of the short-stemmed 'cutty' pipes which came into fashion from about 1840 and which remain the most common type of pipe produced to this day. The excavated sample is likely to date from the second half of the 19th or early 20th century.

The excavated pipe fragments all date from between the late 18th and early 20th century which is consistent with the other ceramics recovered from the trial trenches. The named stem is clearly an import to the Island from Liverpool, while the decorated piece is also likely to have come from the north-west. This is in keeping with other finds from the Island which show a general dependence on imports, principally from the north-west and Scotland, during the 19th century. The only documented production on the Island during this period was in Douglas where two makers were listed between 1837 and 1857: James Fell from 1837 to 1846 and William Culum from 1852 to 1857.

#### *Reference*

Oswald, A. 1975. *Clay Pipes for the Archaeologist*, BAR 14 (Oxford)

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