

# The Potomac Pontil

The Potomac Bottle Collectors – Serving the National Capital

## December 2008 - January 2009

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### Meeting January 27th

Our January Meeting will feature the club's annual contest. Members are encouraged to bring in their favorite dug bottle, shard, go-with, and bottle collected during 2008. We will vote on our favorites, and winners will be announced at our February meeting.

**Collector of the Year** will be awarded for the most impressive bottle entered.

**Digger of the Year** will be awarded for the best bottle dug by a club member.

**Shard of the Year** is traditionally awarded for the best broken bottle dug during the year. Please do not break one of your favorites in the hope of winning this contest.

**Go-with of the Year** entries are collectibles that complement a bottle collection.

Most go-withs are advertising materials for bottled products. If you have the bottle that your entry goes with, please bring it along.

If you ever get confused by the bases of British bottles, check out the great article on British pontil marks by Jerry Kemp at <http://www.diggersdiary.co.uk>. We are pleased to share another fine article from Jerry beginning on page 7.

### Meeting February 24th

We will meet in February and have our annual club dinner. Since this is also Shrove Tuesday, we will likely meet at the Bannockburn clubhouse.

### Dues are Due

We will collect annual dues of \$10 per individual or family at our January meeting. If you cannot attend please mail dues to Jim Sears

P.O. Box 370

Garrett Park, Maryland 20896

Please note that this is now also the address for regular newsletter correspondence including club newsletter exchanges. While mail continues to be forwarded from the old address, this will not always be the case. If you are mailing your dues, please take this opportunity to update our records of email addresses and phone numbers. We will not post any of your personal information on our web site unless you choose to post it there.

Meetings: 8:00 PM on the last Tuesday of each month in the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, 6201 Dunrobbin Dr., Bethesda, MD 20816.

President: Andy Goldfrank

Vice President: Al Miller

Secretary: Jim Sears

Treasurer: Lee Shipman

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Maintained by Al Miller: [www.potomacbottlecollectors.org/contact.php](http://www.potomacbottlecollectors.org/contact.php)

# Distilleries in 3 D

by Jack Sullivan  
(Special to the Potomac Pontil)

As a change of pace, and recognizing the interest of some of our most venerable club members in architecture, this article is devoted to the depiction in three dimensions of whiskey distilleries, real and imagined. That so much attention has been paid to distillery buildings is in itself puzzling since they normally are utilitarian structures and not very attractive.

But don't tell that to the folks at Maker's Mark Whiskey, near Bardstown, Kentucky. They are so taken with their still house, seen here in a photo (Fig. 1), that they have depicted it not just once, but several times. The first is a fanciful ceramic depiction that actually is a bottle. It once held a fifth of the company bourbon that poured from the chimney (Fig. 2). Note that the distillery looks like a cozy cottage that grew a lighthouse rather than a manufacturing facility. A more realistic reproduction is a hard rubber Maker's Mark bar display piece that featured a flat roof area on which a bottle of bourbon could be positioned (Fig. 3).



Fig. 2: Maker's Mark bourbon bottle



Fig. 3: Maker's Mark bar display



Fig. 1: Maker's Mark still house photo

Perhaps the most intriguing Makers Mark model is a two foot tall wooden structure made to look like the tower on the still house (Fig. 4). The box it came in identified it as a “distillery replica and infuser jar.” Puzzled by what an infuser jar might be, I did some research. It appears to be a large glass vessel in which liquor is placed along with other foods, e.g. vodka with bacon, to flavor the spirits. This one has a tap at the base to decant the booze into your glass – a perfect gift for someone who has everything.



Fig. 4: Maker's Mark replica and infuser jar

The Old Taylor Distillery, marked by the castle that served as its administrative headquarters, as shown in a postcard (Fig. 5), also created ceramic bottle that held a fifth of its bourbon (Fig. 6). The turret at right ends in a cork and can be removed to pour the whiskey. Located in Frankfort, Kentucky, Old Taylor also reproduced its architecture in a metal bank, shown here front and back (Figs. 7,8). The money inside could be retrieved by using a key to open a metal panel on the base.

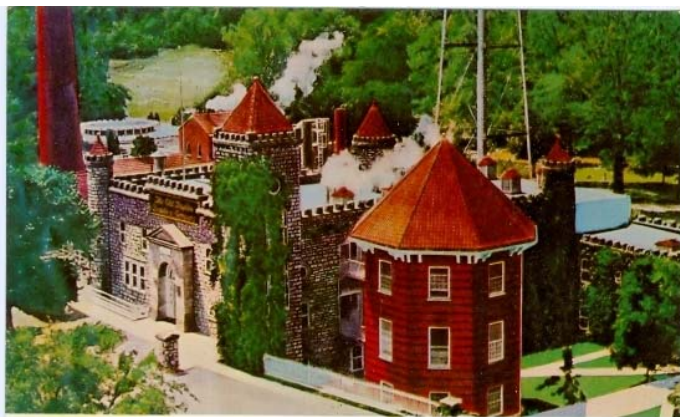


Fig. 5: Old Taylor headquarters postcard



Fig. 6: Old Taylor bourbon bottle



Fig. 7: Old Taylor bank - front



Fig. 8: Old Taylor bank- back

The Ezra Brooks whiskey people also put their product in ceramic distillery bottles. One shown here, front and back, was issued in 1970 (Figs. 9, 10). Featuring a smoke stack, it was colored in green, black and brown, with gold highlights. Like the Old Taylor jug, the top of the factory screwed off to allow the whiskey to be poured. Ezra Brooks also issued a second version of the distillery, this one all in gold (Fig. 11). Made by Heritage China, this bottle featured a cork in the base that could be removed to access the liquor. For comparison, here is a picture of the Medley Distillery at which the whiskey was produced and on which the bottles presumably were patterned (Fig. 12).



Fig. 9: Ezra Brooks bourbon bottle - front



Fig. 10: Ezra Brooks bourbon bottle-back



Fig. 11: Extra Brook gold bottle

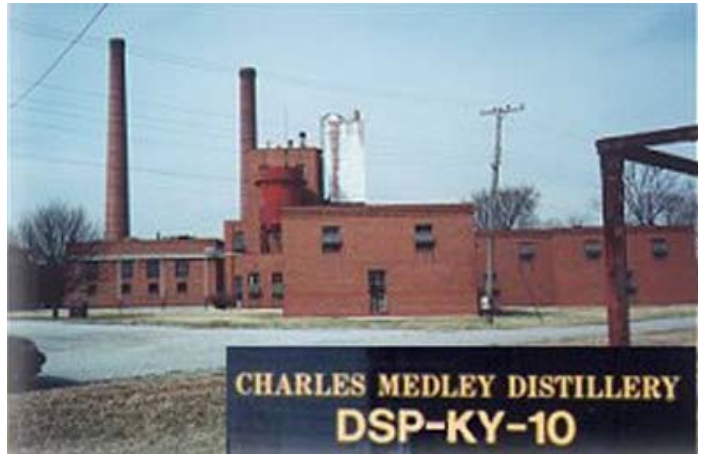


Fig. 12: The Medley (Brooks) Distillery

In addition to distillers like Makers Mark and Old Taylor using replicas of their facilities to hold liquor or other purposes, fanciful depictions of distilleries have been created by artisans in series of architectural miniatures. One is an example from the studio of English sculptor, David Winter (Fig. 13). Regarded as a foremost creator of shrunken buildings, Winter has been the recipient of the Queen's Award for Export, so popular are his products. Winter's ceramic distillery is highly imaginative with its little cottages surrounding two large smoke stacks. One can imagine the tiny workers heigh-ohing their way from their homes, climbing to the distillery and filling bottles that would balance on the head of a pin.



Fig. 13: David Winters distillery

Winter is not the only Englishman making small buildings. The Dickens Village line is sold in Hallmark and other shops to folks who want to recreate an 18th Century English town on their mantle piece or under the Christmas tree. Named for the famous author, Charles Dickens, the product line features buildings based on the places one might visualize while reading a Dickens novel. Given the author's interest in strong drink, a distillery seems an appropriate. This one features a water wheel that rotates, suggesting that the distiller is grinding his own grain for the liquor mash (Fig. 14).



Fig. 14: Dickens Village distillery

A rival line of miniature ceramic buildings is called Lilliput Lane, after the wee folk from the novel *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift. Another import from the UK, Lilliput also features a distillery among its architecture (Fig. 15). Its advertising claims that this is a replica of the actual Edradour Distillery located in Perthshire, Scotland. It claims to be the last original farm distillery in the country, constructed in 1825, as well as the smallest legal distillery of any kind in the world.



Fig. 15: Lilliput Lane distillery

While the previous models were constructed from ceramic or some composite material, a third group of distilleries are made of wood and are meant to be part of model railroad layouts. Many come in kits ready for assembly. The Muldoon Distillery, shown here (Fig. 16), is presented as an Irish facility but originated far from the Emerald Isles. The manufacturer is the BTS Company of Elkins, West Virginia.



Fig. 16: Muldoon "Irish" model

Another architectural replica maker specializes in kits for a wide variety of distillery buildings and puts signs on them for Jack Daniels, Jim Beam, Buffalo Trace, and Southern Comfort – all popular contemporary brands. These models have a rustic look, appropriate to an Old West layout for a Lionel steam train (Fig. 17, 18).



Fig. 17: Jim Beam model



Fig. 18: Buffalo Trace model

For a long time, it seems, this most utilitarian of manufacturing facilities, the distillery, has sparked considerable interest and imagination in three dimensions. My hunch is that the product that flows from these mundane structures is what catches the interest of those who make the models and those who buy them. In other words, it is the hooch and not the hutch that ultimately holds the appeal.

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## Upcoming Area Bottle Shows

### FEBRUARY 1 – SOUTH RIVER, NEW JERSEY

The New Jersey Antique Bottle Club's 13th Annual Show & Sale (Sun. 9 AM - 2 PM, Adm. \$3 adults, under 12, free) at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 88 Jackson St., South River, New Jersey. Sales tables \$30 each. Free parking & appraisals. Food available. INFO: **NJABC**, 24 Charles St., South River, NJ 08882-1603 or **JOE BUTEWICZ**, PH: (732) 236-9945, E-mail: [botlman@msn.com](mailto:botlman@msn.com).



### MARCH 8 – BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

The Baltimore Antique Bottle Club's 29th Annual Show & Sale, (8 AM to 3 PM), at the Physical Education Center, CCBC-Essex, 7201 Rossville Blvd. (I-695, Exit 34), Essex, MD. Info: **ERIC EWEN**, PH: (410) 265-5745, email: [teresaanderic@comcast.net](mailto:teresaanderic@comcast.net)

### MARCH 15 – TYLERSPORT, PENNSYLVANIA

15th Annual Bucks-Mont Bottle Show & Sale, (9 AM to 2 PM, early buyers 8 AM), at the Tylersport Fire Company, 125 Ridge Road, Tylersport, PA. Info: **DAVID BUCK**, 123 East Summit St., Souderton, PA 18964, PH: (215) 723-4048 or **GREG GIFFORD**, PH: (215) 699-5216.

### APRIL 25 – MILLVILLE, NEW JERSEY

The New Jersey Antique Bottle Club's (NJABC) Millville Annual Show & Sale (Sat. 9 AM - 3 PM, Adm. \$2; No early buyers) at the Elks Lodge of Millville, 1815 East Broad Street, Millville, New Jersey. Homemade food and refreshments will be available. Limited tables available for \$30 each. Info.: **PAUL DELGUERCIO**, PH: (609) 352-7104, E-mail [paulhavoc@comcast.net](mailto:paulhavoc@comcast.net) or **JOE BUTEWICZ**, 24 Charles St., South River, NJ 08882..

### APRIL 26 – HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

The Historical Bottle Diggers of Virginia 38th Annual Show & Sale, (9 AM to 3 PM), at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds, U.S. Rt. 11 South, Harrisonburg, VA. Info: **SONNY SMILEY**, PH: (540) 434-1129 or email: [lithiaman1@yahoo.com](mailto:lithiaman1@yahoo.com)

### MAY 3 – BRICK, NEW JERSEY

The Jersey Shore Bottle Club's 37th Annual Antique Bottles & Post Card Show & Sale (Sun. 8:30 AM - 2 PM, Donation \$3) at the Brick Elks, 2491 Hooper Ave., Brick, New Jersey. Info: **RICH PEAL**, PH: (732) 267-2528 or E-mail: [manodirt@msn.com](mailto:manodirt@msn.com).

## Digging and Collecting Here (As Opposed to There)

by Jerry Kemp of Great Britain

In a variation on the observation by Winston Churchill, that Britain and the United States are “Two nations separated by a common language”, our two bottle collecting nations have many similarities but almost as many differences. My dialogue over the last few years with a number of diggers from your side of the Atlantic Ocean has pointed out the gap in our “common language” as applied to the bottle digging and collecting passion that we share. Accordingly, making assumptions that what seems to be obvious to British collectors actually *is* obvious to U.S. collectors can be dangerous. Therefore, for the benefit of all readers the following story contains some explanations of terms that from my over-the-pond viewpoint, are not in the U.S. bottle digging and collecting “language”. Some of the reason for these differences likely stem from the history and nature of bottle collecting and digging in Britain.

Bottle collecting and, in particular, bottle digging, started later and slower in the United Kingdom than in the States. Compared to the established bottle digging and collecting community in the U.S. in the 1960s, the hobby did not get going in the U.K. until the early 1970s. Perhaps most significant, unlike in the U.S., privy digging has never been part of the U.K. digging scene. This is for many reasons, the most important of which is probably that British privies, for reasons that can only be guessed at, seem to very, very rarely contain bottles. Instead, digging in the U.K. is focused on dumps, also known as rubbish tips or tips. This practice, along with the fact that virtually all pre-1870 dumps here are unproductive due to heavy scavenging and recycling in that era, means that hinge mold and pontil era bottles are rarely found. U.S. diggers are, in my opinion, soooo fortunate in this respect -- no matter how much hard work has to go into finding pontils, it is at least possible in the States to *hope* for a “pontil dig” more than once in a lifetime!

Consequently, the attention of most British collections and collectors is on bottles dating from approximately 1870 to the end of the First World War. After 1918, relatively “boring” automatic bottle machine (*i.e.*, ABM) bottles become prevalent and, in the space of only about five years thereafter, stoneware almost completely disappears. British hinge mold and pontiled bottles are strongly sought after by some collectors (including me as I am obsessed with early English medicines!), but they are definitely a minority in the U.K. Much like in the States, there are a relatively small number of collecting categories within which rarities are heavily chased and, because of the lack of new finds coming onto the market, the prices of some bottles have reached heights undreamt of a few years ago. Some of the most popular U.K. collecting categories, many of which have numerous sub-divisions, include:

- **Mineral waters.** Also known as sodas in the States, in the U.K., collector interest is focused on internal

stoppers and torpedos. Bottles, lips, or marbles in the internal stoppers that are in colors other than aqua are the focus of many collectors and diggers. Codd’s Patent closures are a prime example of the ever popular internal stoppers; in turn, a “hybrid” is an uncommon, bizarre and highly sought-after bottle, usually dating to the 1880s-90s, that combines a Codd’s Patent top half with the round or pointed base of a torpedo.

- **Stoneware ginger beers.** Often referred to as “GBs”, this is one of the most popular major collecting categories with those dating between 1880 and 1920 attracting the most attention. Some of the steepest price rises of recent years have been in this category and, in particular, on the elaborate pictorial trademark transfers. Sought-after examples routinely changing hands for several hundred dollars, and some of the best examples now being rated at \$5,000+.
- **Pot lids and ointment pots.** These glazed and transfer printed earthenware containers were used to a greater extent and for a longer period of time in the U.K. than in the U.S. The peak use of pot lids in Britain seems to have been between 1870 and 1910, and there are several thousand different types of lid now recorded. Most sought after are pictorial Bears Grease lids, closely followed by other types of pictorials.
- **Inks.** A hugely popular category, with hundreds of shapes in both glass and stoneware, and with colored glass inks being relatively common.
- **Poisons.** Likewise hugely popular, and these days a transatlantic collecting field as many British poisons are in American collections, and vice versa.
- **Cream pots.** Small wide-mouth earthenware pots that are often transfer printed and sometimes with elaborate pictorial advertising. A very popular category.
- **Cures.** Some of the bottles in this category, such as Warners, Radams, Turlingtons, and Dalbys, will be very familiar to U.S. collectors. Others, such as Daffy’s Elixir, Handysides Consumption Cure and Sibleys Tincture, will be less well known. This category (along with torpedos) is one of the few to include a range of pontiled bottles.
- **Stoneware flasks.** This group includes “impressed”, “slab seal” and “Reform” flasks; these are all from the Nineteenth Century. Slab seals usually state the name of a local pub or merchant; there are few American equivalents in pottery and the closest examples would be the ubiquitous strap-sided flask with an embossed slug plate (*e.g.*, Jas. Tharp from Washington, D.C.). In turn, the Reform flasks primarily date from the 1820s to 1860s and are often figural or highly decorative with a focus on the political and major social changes of the period. Reform flasks are the stoneware British equivalent of the glass historical flasks beloved by many U.S. collectors.
- **Black glass.** This category consists of pre-1850 glass primarily freeblowns and three-piece molds; it likewise includes sealed bottles that may date significantly earlier but also into the late Nineteenth Century.

- **Local stuff.** Of course, one of the main foundations to the hobby is the collection of local items regardless of the above categories; almost every specialist collector will also have a “local” collection.

Hopefully that bit of background will help U.S. readers understand and appreciate the context of the following digging story a little more. If you are interested in learning more about these collecting categories, please feel free to visit my website (which I host with my digging partner Darren Gray) at <http://www.diggersdiary.co.uk/Collections/Collectionsmainpage.htm>. Regardless, it does seem to be true that a digging story is a digging story, and will always be enjoyed by other diggers not matter where in the world they hail from!

### **A Lincolnshire, England Dig: The Brickyard Lane Tip**

Most areas of Britain, and probably every place where bottles are dug, have at least one site that legends say would produce huge amounts of bottles and relics of epic quality if only it could be dug. The story goes on in some variation or another that: If it weren't either built on, or owned by a psycho, or patrolled by trained killer dogs, or mined, you'd only have to put your fork in the ground and out would pop fantastic rarities by the dozen. Those rumours are usually based on oft-retold stories of some long-departed pioneer's half hour dig in 1970, or comments by a digger driver, or overheard in the pub after one pint too many just before closing time. Our neck of the woods (Lincolnshire and the Humberside area, of central eastern England) is no exception, with a couple of such “mother lode” sites rumoured to exist.

In the summer of 2005, after spending far too long digging a moderately horrible dump dating to 1920, my digging buddy Darren Gray and I decided that it was time to raise our sights. We would try for one of the legendary local sites: the Brickyard Lane tip. The Brickyard Lane dump has been known since the 1970s, but had never been dug properly although there was a long history of digging attempts without permission. These furtive efforts generally resulted in holes left open, broken bottles thrown all over the place, and a landowner even more anti-bottle digger than before. The site had apparently produced at least one local Codd hybrid and a number of local gingers; however, according to rumour, it was most famous for having produced several examples of a ginger beer from The Economic Supply Company from the town of Grimsby on the Lincolnshire coast. This ginger beer is one of the most sought after, and rarest, of all British ginger beer bottles with fewer than ten good examples known to exist. Over the years, the legend about Brickyard Lane most often heard was that “dozens of ginger beers” had come out on every dig, with rare pictorials being ten-a-penny.

Our decision to “go for it” happened after a typically frustrating day of dump hunting. As we were driving home past Brickyard Lane, on the spur of the moment, we pulled over to examine this legendary site. As much as anything, we just wanted to remind ourselves what a proper dump with some decent age actually looked like. Like many brickyards in the U.K., Brickyard Lane had an ash-sorting operation associated with the brickyard. The reason is that bricks were made of clay

mixed with ash that was extracted from domestic rubbish, and the left-over trash including bottles was frequently thrown into the nearest convenient hole in the ground. More often than not that hole was the clay pit that provided the brick clay. The dump at Brickyard Lane consisted of the remains of an old clay pit, now a pond and a small field alongside. The most productive area, we understood, had been along the pond's edge where the soil had eroded and exposed bottles and other trash.



**Photos 1 & 2. Brickyard Lane pond and pond's edge – who knows what lies beneath the surface?**

As we eyed the site, we saw bottles along the pond's edge, all dating to about 1900, which is a sought after period for British bottle collectors. Thinking about the old adage “nothing ventured, nothing gained”, Darren and I decided to try for permission despite the universally-acknowledged belief that it was a completely pointless exercise. A letter went in the post



the next day with the expectation that the response would be, at best, a business-like version of “Bu\*\*er off.” To our delight, however, the first letter led to three months of correspondence and phone discussions with the owner that culminated in a letter laying out the requirements for any dig and granting us permission!

### *The First Days of Digging at Brickyard Lane*

Our first day on the site was in a late September. As you might imagine, much thinking went into how we were going to approach Brickyard Lane. Most importantly, Darren and I wanted to dig the entire site systematically; however, probing was impossible as the topsoil was full of stones and thus we knew little about the size or shape of the dump. Not knowing how far back from the pond edge the tip extended, our plan was to start at the bank and dig a narrow test trench into the field until we found the outer edge of the tip. At the point where the test trench started, a hundred years of ducks climbing the bank in this spot had eroded a pile of bottles, jars and pots out of the pond’s edge.



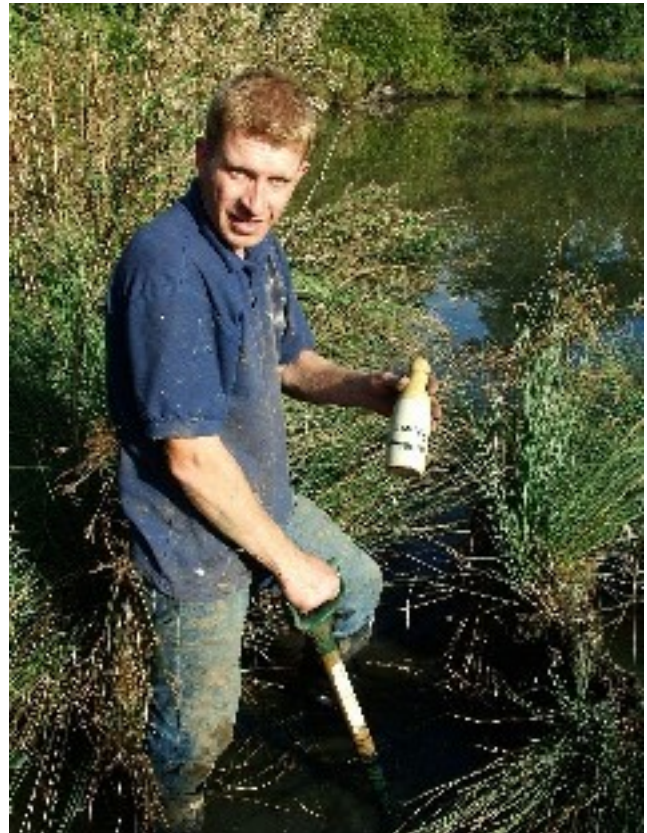
**Photo 3.** The Brickyard Lane tip before starting the first test trench

Our plan was to place the cut turf, topsoil and capping dirt on a tarp to one side and then have a separate tarp for the dump dirt; we would then refill with the trash layer first, the capping second, the topsoil third, and then replace the turf to return the site to good condition so as to keep the landowner happy and his animals safe. As I dug into the bank, we soon learned that the cap was about three feet thick on top of a one-foot trash seam. And this trash seam headed back into the field for ... only 6 feet. It soon became apparent that in the late 1800s, rubbish had been deposited in a band alongside the pond and then capped within a few years. Nonetheless, the seam was laden with good relics, being a fairly typical brick pit dump with all of the ash removed for brick making and leaving the glass, metal and pottery for us a century later. Our haul for the first day was a bit pathetic (a few local beers and one codd bottle from John Davies of Gainsborough) but the age was encouraging and the seam was heaving with stuff. Before leaving we did a careful search around the pond’s edges and in the shallow water. Darren soon found a stoneware bottle base

sticking out of the side that turned out to be a John Davies GB, which was a great way to finish the day.



**Photo 4.** Darren in the test trench on the first day bounded by separate tarps for topsoil and tip contents



**Photo 5.** Darren with the Davies ginger found sticking out of the bank

The second day at the site we dug a much wider hole next to the first one, and discovered that most of the dump was underwater. The day’s haul was slightly better than the previous day, but the number of broken codd bottles was sickening with most of these having the lip or the neck knocked off, probably by children to get to the marble inside.



Photo 6. Darren hitting the water on the second day at Brickyard Lane

The find of the day was a salt glazed porter bottle. Darren threw it to me from the hole saying “Shame this one’s plain.” However, a quick rinse revealed the single word “CLEMESHA” impressed on the shoulder. This was a nice early bottle, probably some 50 years old when thrown away, but we had no idea whether Clemesha referred to someone’s name or the bottle’s contents. Research eventually revealed that Clemesha is an uncommon surname; in fact, the only Clemesha this porter could have belonged to was John Clemesha, an ale and porter merchant with a shop on Quay Street in the town of Hull, between 1847 and 1855, about 40 miles from the site. (Over the course of our dig, we eventually found lots more bottles from Hull in this tip.) We also got a couple more Gainsborough Codds, an aqua burst-lip lamp, circa 1820s-30s salt-glaze stoneware jar from one of the Derbyshire potteries, and a small heap of local beers. One of the beers was an extremely rare, acid-etched green glass bottle from James Sanderson of Gainsborough.



Photo 8. The Clemesha porter after cleaning



Photo 7. Keepers for the second day: beers, beers, and more local beers. Alongside are the Codds, Clemesha porter, and the 1820s-30s salt-glaze stoneware jar.

The next time, as with the previous dig, there were loads of beers with just one or two more interesting items. This included two gingers and a heartbreaker, in the form of a tiny blue print preserve jar, transferred printed on one side with the words “Jennings Model Preserve Jar”, and on the back with a royal coat of arms and the date 1862. This is an extremely rare item and worthy of keeping even with the big chunk missing; it is also known with black and red transfers. One of the ginger beers was an Aldam Marshall, which roughly dates from 1898 to 1915; it is from the nearby town of Retford and is a commonly found bottle in local dumps. As a bit of background, British ginger beers come in two basic shapes: ‘standard’ with a hard shoulder and ‘champagne’ with gently sloping shoulders; most of the really good British ginger beers are champagne shape. The Marshall is your classic standard form but definitely still worth digging.



Photo 9. Pretty but a bit worn down Jennings Model Preserve Jar



Photo 10. The Aldam Marshall GB sees the light of day for the first time in 100 years.

### *A Champagne of a Day at Brickyard Lane*

Our fourth day of digging was in early October. By now we were into a part of the tip that was heavily dug by illegal diggers previously, and was covered with small overgrown holes and spoil heaps. The dump here extended deeper into the field, and was almost 15 feet in width. We cleared the weeds away, laid the tarps, and got going. Darren immediately started getting into the seam once the cap was removed and straight away the broken codd's start piling up. In turn, I managed to extract a plastic coke bottle left by one of the earlier illegal diggers (although I still do not know why I was cheerful about finding it).



Photo 11. Jerry with late Twentieth Century relic. – and happy about it too

We dug the whole area down to the pond's edge, where the seam was between one and two feet underwater; by this dig we had learned to wear waders because of the water. Actually, there was not really water in the hole as it was more a kind of liquid mud with lumps floating about in it. Darren was digging the seam up on the bank while I was pulling broken beers and codd's from the water at the bottom of the slope, when I felt something roll under my foot. Reaching into the quagmire and expecting to find yet another necked Codd, I instantly recognised the form in my hand. Without bringing the bottle out of the water I said to Darren "I've got a GB here, and its champagne shape". As he watched, I lifted it from the water and shouted "%\$\*@+!# It's a \*&^% Economic!!!!". In spite of the rumours about Brickyard Lane we could NOT believe our eyes and were rendered speechless. Once we got over the shock of the find, a quick rinse revealed a virtually perfect Economic Supply Company champagne style, ginger beer. Simply stated, the Holy Grail of British ginger beer bottles.



Photo 12. Jerry with the freshly dug Economic Supply Company champagne style, ginger beer

After a long break, mostly spent just staring at the bottle now lying on the grass and, occasionally making stupid noises in appreciation, we packed the Economic away and got back to the hole. The ginger beer turned out to be more or less by itself at the pond's edge. Turning our attention to the rest of the hole, after an hour or so pulling out broken codd after broken codd, Darren went for a quick cigarette and tea break. Scratching away at the top of the bank where the seam was only a few inches thick, I thought that this would be a good time for another Economic to show its face. And almost immediately, there was the neck of another champagne shape GB sticking out of the side of the hole. Jammed behind half a brick and a load of broken crockery, it took a little while before the ginger beer finally came free. Turning the bottle over, I found a beautiful transfer printed picture of a church, and the wording "Old Fashioned Home Brewed Ginger Beer / East Bros. / Louth" with an 1896 date. Another remarkable find.

All told, it was not a bad day's digging: an Economic Supply Company and an East Brothers. Great examples of the best two GBs from Lincolnshire, and they both turn up in the same hole on the same day. The legends about the site *were* true! (Or were they?)



Photo 13. Ginger beer waiting to be plucked from the hole



Photo 14. Darren at the end of the day paying homage to the Bottle Gods



Photo 15. Some of the 80 broken Coddys found that day, along with two broken Gainsborough GBs, and the other two rather better GBs



Photo 16. East Brothers and Economic Supply Company ginger beers, after just a rinse, shine in all their glory.

*Slogging On at Brickyard Lane*

After the remarkable recoveries of early October, Darren and I found ourselves getting a bit over-excited, wondering how we were going to cope with the flood of Economic Supply Company ginger beers that we were ‘obviously’ going to dig over the next few months at the no longer mythical Brickyard Lane. Alas, it was not to be. In fact, it turned into a long hard slog (although not without reward).

After those first four days of digging, in 2005, Darren and I had about 20 more days of systematic digging on the Brickyard Lane tip. Most of these digs were fun, with a steady trickle of decent finds and a flood of local bulk, but the mega-finds did not appear. As we moved along the pond edge, the seam got deeper until it stabilised at about 3 feet underwater. The pond edge itself was mostly left alone at this time, to be dug in warmer and drier weather. It took us a while to get used to digging in this muck. Often times, the trash seam did not start until more than a foot below the water, and then was only a foot or so thick. Nonetheless, the trash layer produced! One time two GBs came out almost in the same forkful. Overall, this was turning out to be a good site for GBs; however, most of the glass was in bad condition: sick, chipped and scuffed.



**Photo 17.** Jerry in typical muck and water with two John Davies of Gainsborough GBs that were found with (almost) one swipe

One of the better days during that stretch was in mid-October. By this time we had reached an area that had been heavily dug to just *above* the seam by illegal diggers (and, no, we could not figure that logic). The seam was between a foot and two feet thick below a 3-foot cap, and as usual it was absolutely rattling with stuff. That day produced a couple of heartbreakers: a huge, one-only-known, champagne shape, slip glaze porter from “W Dewick / Gainsboro”, minus lip, and an almost perfect Beavis Patent Codd variation from John Davies, but with a small hole in the cross-pinch in the back of the neck. Beavis Patent Codd from John Davies are fantastic bottles depicting one of the best and largest pictorial trade marks. They are also very rare. The internal marble stopper patented by Hiram Codd in the early 1870s is rare in the States, but is by far the most common type of soda in the U.K. between about 1890 and 1920. The original patent was so successful that it spawned huge numbers of imitators and additional patents over the following 40 years, and rarer patents and variations are highly sought. In particular, the Beavis Patent is a more common variation that was manufactured with a steeply curved cross-pinch, making the marble less likely to damage the bottle. Most sought after are cobalt Codd (all cobalt soda bottles are very rare in the U.K.) and our adventures in pursuit of some I will reserve for another story. Coming back to our dig that day, Darren managed to hit a spot that was full of stuff and he pulled out yet another John Davies pottery ginger beer.



**Photo 18.** A days finds in mid-October: porters, GBs, cylinders, Codd (including the holed Beavis Patent, bottom centre) and lots of bulk

**Photo 19.** Wonderful graphic on John Davies glass Beavis Patent Codd

Our next good outing was a week later. This day produced a second Economic Supply Company ginger beer, but it was badly damaged with the lip missing and a chunk of the back falling out. Along with the Economic were two very rare local porters – a quart “E C Davies / Gainsboro” and a pint “Rayner Junr / Ferry”. Also recovered was a previously unrecorded early salt glaze porter from Hull, impressed “W Dossor / Hull”, with the Burton Codnor Park pottery stamp indicating it was manufactured between 1821 and 1832. The Dossor also had damage, with most of the lip missing, but is still a great find. All four of these were in one little group and, ironically, about six inches under the bottom of one of the strange, shallow illegal holes.





Photo 20. Four quality pieces of stoneware

In late November, Darren and I were working in a part of the tip that had been heavily dug by the illegal night diggers when we found an untouched area. The cap was less than two feet thick and the seam was partly above water, yet we pulled almost 20 broken GBs from this hole, including the base of an Economic. This shard was only the third example of an Economic Supply Company ginger beer we had found on the tip -- and by now we had turned over more than half the site. In addition, this is one of the few times when the seam was above water and we actually got to see what it looked like. It was apparent to us that the edge of the old clay pit sloped sharply and the trash seam was sandwiched between a clean cap and a clay base. Whole items from this dig included a Walton of Grimsby ginger beer (all white standard shape with chameleon pictorial trademark), a Harrison of Gainsboro ginger beer, and five local coddos. The star of the day turned out to be an early and extremely rare, red print lid for "Bentley's Circassian Cream."



Photo 21. The side of the GB hole showing the pile of broken Coddos and GBs



Photo 22. The interesting stuff from the GB hole



Photo 23. Image of the trash seam above water (for once) and brimming with bottles.

Come December, the weather (and water) was getting colder. The area we were digging in was under a thicker cap than previously with the trash seam 100% underwater. We also started to run into problems with tree roots here that turned out to be a taste of things to come. This hole was dreadful at the start but got better rather quickly because it produced our only whole Warners Safe Cure from the tip. This was a pint size London amber version that Darren found floating around behind him as it popped out of the underwater seam without us noticing! In addition, we extracted a nice slab sealed flagon from Boston (the Lincolnshire original, which the place in Massachusetts is named after!) debossed "Robinson & Smith / Spirit Merchants / Boston". "Slab seals" are pads of clay on the sides of some stoneware bottles and crocks that are can be impressed with the name of the proprietor, contents, and location much like glass seals on bottles. Essentially they are labels made of stoneware. These stoneware vessels are found mostly in the midlands and north of England while being uncommon in the south, Scotland, and Wales. In addition, large flagons with slab seals are common but desirable; in turn, smaller bottles and flasks with slabs are rare and aggressively

sought by collectors. Other keepers from this hole included three gingers, a large Gainsborough porter from “F & G Gamble,” some Coddys, and a few beers.



**Photo 24.** A good December dig resulting in a slab seal flagon (large upright stoneware piece), ginger beers, porters, Coddys and beers

Our last two days digging on the site in 2005 were absolutely freezing. One day Darren and I dug our first hole right in among the trees. Ice was on the pond by this time, and it was so cold that the water in our dig hole started to freeze and became slush whenever we took a break. Having learned that freezing liquid mud and digging do not mix, we elected to spend time trenching along the top of the bank to insure we found the tail-end of the trash seam where we might not have chased the layer all the way up in prior holes. Sadly these cold days produced no keepers at all – and doubly so when you consider our efforts were in temperatures that did not rise above  $-4^{\circ}$  Celsius ( $25^{\circ}$  Fahrenheit for you Americans).



**Photo 25.** Darren joining the Polar Bear Society by digging for bottles in freezing mud



**Photo 26.** Tired of the muddy slush, we tackled the edge of the tip in the snow-covered field.

### *Warmer Weather Leads to the Home Straight at Brickyard Lane*

By April 2006, we had been away from Brickyard Lane for almost four months and were getting desperate to dig on the site. The problem was that, despite the warmer weather, the water level at Brickyard Lane was over a foot higher than it had been in December. However, springtime did provide us an opportunity to tidy-up and seed the areas already dug as required by our permission. Soon thereafter, we started the 2006 digging season in the shallowest area in the pond. This area provided yet more ginger beers from Gainsborough, specifically a “Sanderson,” and another Davies. To our delight this part of the tip also gave us a previously unrecorded stoneware porter impressed “E\*Lansdall / Gainsboro”. Research later identified Lansdall as a chemist and druggist in Gainsborough in the 1830s who was gone by 1842. This was another nice holdover to add to our growing collection from Brickyard Lane.

The pond edge outside the trees was disappointing. Several times we got two or three feet down only to find old plastic bottles or digging gloves. It turned out that this whole area had been tidied up by the landowner in the 1990s after a period of illegal digging destroyed the bank. An excavator was used to rebuild the edge by scooping up the bottom of the pond and heaping it alongside. This work mixed modern trash with old tip contents, clay, and black pond-bottom sludge; in turn, this meant it was impossible ascertain, in 2006, the original pond edge. As part of our systematic effort, nonetheless, we dug the whole length over about four weekends although it turned out to be a bit of a waste of time.



**Photo 27. Darren in the water again modeling the latest in cutting edge designer gear.**

And so into the trees we ventured next. As part of our commitment to the landowner, we had to leave this area looking tidy, which was a bit of a challenge since the top 6" was nothing but roots and bricks, and the next three feet not much better. Yet this impediment to digging had also been an obstacle for the illegal diggers and we ultimately found loads of undug seam. The water was still deep so digging was slow work; this was especially true when the hole could not be separated from the pond rendering bailing impossible.



**Photo 28. Drowning digging fork in a typical hole among the trees in the Spring**

By June the water table returned to the lower levels of the previous year, making the digging a lot easier. One of the highlights was a hole, which was next to the "freezing mud" pit in December on one side and the largest tree bordering the pond on the other side. Our goal, and one in which we succeeded, was to dig (very carefully!) a long way under the tree from this hole. After many digs at Brickyard Lane, by this time, we had perfected our digging technique: first, we kept an embankment between the hole and the pond; and second, we bailed with two buckets every ten or fifteen minutes which lowered the water two feet or more below the level in the pond. This process allowed us to see our efforts and permitted us to dig into the sides of holes, which was the only way to get at some parts of this tip.

This time, once the capping was off we went straight down into a crunchy, undug, two foot thick seam. Bottles started popping up left, right, and centre straight away. A "Harrison" 10oz Codd was sticking out of the wall so close to an earlier hole that we must have missed it previously by an inch at most. A small hoard of (previously uncommon) dark green "Spink Brothers" half pint beers turned up, and then Darren pulled out a huge slip glazed porter. Alas, no amount of washing and rubbing would make any writing appear on it. Caving into the sides of the hole, Darren brought a Davies GB up on the end of his fork (and our hearts missed a beat until we knew it was not an Economic). At this time I was exploring the opposite corner, trying to find the edge of another of our old holes. Kneeling down in a foot of mud, with a 3-foot overhang of roots above my head, I noticed half way up the side of the hole the base of a large, round, stoneware piece surrounded by bricks and roots. I figured it was a slab sealed flagon but upon exploring with my fingers it felt short and fat with a raised decorative band around the base, and had three funny little peg-like feet underneath. Hmmm, not a flagon. At this point, I had no idea what it was but Darren guessed exactly right. After at least a half an hour of struggling to fight the roots, mud, and bricks (or from Darren's point of view, half an hour of spectator sport), I pulled out a fantastic salt-glazed water filter in almost perfect condition.



**Photo 29. Jerry (finally) holding the 1860s Danchell's patented water filter.**





FILTERING APPARATUS, by Messrs. T. H. Danchell & Co., London.

**Photo 30.** Image of the purifier in action from a book titled *The Exhibited Machinery of 1862*.

This stoneware holdover was probably made at one of the Lambeth potteries in London in the 1860s-70s based upon the filter's décor, manufacturing style and identified patent. The filter has a huge decorative sprig on the side proclaiming it to be "F H DANCHELL'S PATENT, Supplied by THE LONDON AND GENERAL WATER PURIFYING COMPANY LIMITED," all below an impressive royal coat of arms. Upon examination the water filter looks like a Stephen Green product, but he went out of business in 1860. In turn, Frederick Danchell holds a minor place in the history of medicine at the time the "germ theory" of disease was gradually gaining acceptance because he patented a kit for testing water quality in the 1860s. To say we were both more than a little surprised that this beauty came out whole would be an understatement.

### *Crossing the Finish Line: the Final Weekend at Brickyard Lane*

Our last dig at Brickyard Lane was a few weeks later. During our prior visits, Darrent and I systematically worked areas previously ignored because they were either too horrible to contemplate (*e.g.*, directly underneath large trees) or had been hammered by illegal diggers. The possibility of another ginger beer from East Brothers or (especially) the Economic Supply Company, along with the more realistic hope of finding stoneware porters, kept us going back. The first day of the last weekend was spent finishing off in the trees. Horrible. Digging in the entanglement of roots and bricks again – I actually had to use a saw to cut off chunks of the capping – allowed us to dig down on one side of the largest tree, find the seam, and join up with holes we had dug on the other side of the tree. Total finds that day worth mentioning were ... ummm, was ... one chipped John Davies GB.

Not to be discouraged, we spent the next morning digging out the last area of pond edge, but got nothing to show

for it because it turned out most of that hole had already been dug by illegal diggers. In the afternoon, we ventured back outside the trees to finish off a small area we had not chased along to the bitter end several months before. This was literally the very last place on the entire Brickyard Lane site that we had not explored during the course of months of systematic digging. And this turned out to be a good idea because we finally found an undamaged Beavis Patent: a fantastic 10oz John Davies pictorial. Not a bad way to finish our dig at the legendary Brickyard Lane.



**Photo 31.** Darren with Beavis Patent internal stopper from John Davies

### *The Wrap-up*

Darren and I went back another day to tidy up the site, in accord with the conditions of the permission we had obtained. Huge amounts of scattered glass and pottery were collected (from on the surface and the shallow parts of the pond) and buried. Some areas were levelled and the side of the pond was shored up where the ducks had been up to no good. Our promise was to leave the site in better condition than when we first arrived, and we did so much to the landowner's satisfaction. Also wrapped into that commitment was that we would systematically excavate the entire tip so that no diggers would want to venture onto his land in the future – and this we also accomplished. As you might imagine, this landowner is now a solid reference for our future efforts to access sites that are deemed off-limits.

In terms of digging, Brickyard Lane was a hard slog of over 40 days of digging through clay capping, tree roots and bricks, water, previously dug and disturbed areas, and even the weather. Thus, by the end, Darren and I were delighted to have dug at Brickyard Lane but were equally relieved that we had finished digging the entire site from end to end. From a collector's viewpoint, this was really a stoneware tip as most of the glass was in terrible condition. For example, of the 50 or more unbroken codd's, only 3 or 4 were in really good condition.

The lasting legacy of digging this site, for us, was probably two-fold. Firstly, it was a site that we had wanted to dig for many, many years simply to satisfy our own curiosity. We had heard all of the stories, but we did not know what to believe or disbelieve. Now we know, first hand, exactly what the site was like and what it contained. Secondly, Darren and I both added several rare, historically interesting, and in some cases surprisingly early, bottles to our collections. These keepers were primarily stoneware bottles, including early, mid and late 19<sup>th</sup> Century ale and porter bottles and some beautiful late Nineteenth Century underglaze printed ginger beers. I also now have a spectacularly embossed Beavis patent codd bottle from a local company – and arguably the most attractively embossed Beavis patent bottle from anywhere in the United Kingdom. On top of that, we had several months of (mostly) enjoyable, and sometimes even exciting, digging in a beautiful spot!

We concluded the Brickyard Lane tip dates to almost exactly 1900 with its use limited to one or two years at the most, as there were no noticeable differences in the majority of artifacts from one end of the tip to the other. Apart from the obvious holdovers or late throw-outs, dated items ranged from 1896 on a broken codd to 1900 on a blacking pot. Interestingly, or perhaps strangely, we only found two pot lids (usually very common on British dumps of this age) and less than 20 small inks (but there were lots of bulk inks, primarily stoneware variants but also a few made of glass). The majority of bottles were minerals and beers but these were accompanied by plenty of whiskeys and case gins. Not a single dolls head was found, broken or whole, although a number of broken metal toys did turn up. There were also literally thousands of shoes, larger pieces of cut leather, and even two broken cobblers lasts; in fact, the amount of leather made the digging even more difficult at times as if it was not trying already. Darren and I surmised, based upon all of the digging, that the rubbish came from a small working class area of Gainsborough comprised of just one or two streets, where there was not much money but lots of drinking was done, and which included at least one cobblers' shop.

In addition, the large number of finds from Hull -- almost 30 miles from the inland town of Gainsborough -- is not as surprising as it might seem. Hull is a large town and a once-important port, located on the north shore of the Humber Estuary in Yorkshire half way up the east coast of England. Hull was one of the most important ports in Britain from the middle ages until the late Nineteenth Century, both for fishing with a focus on whaling and for trade with continental Europe and the Baltic. Gainsborough, on the navigable River Trent, was

also a port at that time, also with important trading links to Scandinavia and the Baltic. The Trent empties into the Humber, and any ships trading between Gainsborough and the Baltic or elsewhere would have passed within sight of Hull, with many stopping at Hull to collect or drop additional cargo. In other words, the two towns were linked by a well developed maritime trade route. As well as the incidental carrying of individual bottles between the two towns as part of sailors personal effects, it's quite likely that there was some kind of formal trade, probably including bottled goods, between these two towns. I like to think that the Hull bottles we found on this Gainsborough dump site were relics of those ancient trading links between small-town Lincolnshire and mainland Europe.

Overall, Brickyard Lane was a remarkable dig for a host of reasons starting with our ability to gain permission to dig a legendary site and ending with the wonderful bottles (and history) we recovered.

### **Brickyard Lane Final Tally**

32 stoneware ginger beers (including three pictorials);  
 6 impressed slip-glazed local stoneware porters (including unrecorded "E\*Lansdall" from Gainsborough);  
 2 salt-glaze stoneware porters (Clemesha and Dossor, both from Hull);  
 4 torpedos and round base cylinders;  
 at least 100 local beers kept (with an unknown number reburied);  
 2 pot lids;  
 2 flagons (1 slab sealed);  
 52 Codd's (plus 1,242 broken examples – yes, we counted them);  
 1 John Davies Beavis Patent Codd  
 1 railway whisky flask (Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway)  
 1 Prattware pot ("mending the nets")  
 1 Warners Safe Cure from London  
 2 pontiled perfume bottles



**Photo 32. The 32 intact ginger beers found at Brickyard Lane. The three pictorials in the front row are an all white Walton from Grimsby depicting a chameleon, the two tone East Brothers of Louth showing a church, and the Economic Supply Co. of Grimsby sporting an albatross and anchor.**



Photo 33. Three of the stoneware porters found (left to right): salt-glazed “Clemesha”; slip-glazed “E C Davies / Gainsboro” and “Rayner Junr / Ferry”.



Umm, nice find, but isn't a “lady's leg” supposed to be a bottle?



Photo 34. Heartbreakers and criers (left to right): “Dakins Patent Coffee”; two-pint porter “W Dewick / Gainsboro” (only the second example known); piece of an Economic Supply Co. GB; blue transfer mini “Jennings Patent Preserves” jar; “W. Dossor / Hull” salt-glaze porter with Burton Codnor Park pottery mark; slab sealed porter “J\*Shaw / Wine & Spirit\*Merchant / 44 White\*Friars\*Gate / Hull”; base of hybrid Codd from “Davies / Gainsboro”; Economic Supply Co. GB minus lip; “Handysides Blood Food” aqua flask; “J. Bourne EX” marked porter (bottlers name missing / illegible); two-pint porter “John Slagg / Gainsboro” (first known example); early style J. Davies GB missing lip and neck (second known example); two-pint porter impressed “P. G.”, probably for Pashley of Gainsborough (first known example); base of an Economic Supply Co. GB.



Vice President Al Miller limps in after a softball mishap.

Photos from Potomac Bottle Collectors November Meeting



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