

THE ROMAN POTTERY MADE AT FULMER

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In a note in the *Records of Bucks*, xiv. 67, Mr. Clive Rouse recorded the discovery of the site of Roman pottery kilns at Duke's Wood, Fulmer. No excavation has been possible, and in present circumstances this may have to be indefinitely postponed. A considerable quantity of unstratified pottery from the site was, however, collected. The description and classification of this has been undertaken in the belief that it may prove useful to future students of the Roman occupation of the neighbourhood. By the beginning of the second century pottery seems to have been manufactured in every inhabited locality where suitable clay was available. There are in consequence great differences in the forms of vessels in daily use in different areas of the province, types that had become obsolete in one part being found in regular use in another. Grave errors may therefore be committed by those who quote parallels from one area in support of the date of a vessel from another. In the following report the quoting of parallels has been restricted wherever possible to the area in which the Fulmer kilns are situated. It is only by the study of coarse pottery at its source of manufacture that a sound foundation can be laid for a knowledge of Romano-British coarse ware.

There is nothing at all remarkable about the pottery manufactured at Fulmer. It is coarse, the ware being often soft and always sandy and porous. Decoration of any kind is uncommon, and when it occurs, it is commonplace. Certain similarities to the products of the Hedgerley Kilns¹ might be expected, and the nature of these makes it clear that the two potteries were at work at approximately the same time. But these parallels are confined to four types

¹ *Records of Bucks*, XIII, 252 et seq.

only.² What is really remarkable is that there should be so little overlap.

Among the vessels produced at Fulmer it is at once noticeable that there are neither jugs nor mortaria. This is true also of Hedgerley. These seem to have had a wider distribution than other coarse wares, possibly because they demanded special clay for their successful manufacture. As at Hedgerley³ the survival of the native Belgic tradition in such types as 8, 11, 12, is to be expected, and these are found alongside the common "pie-dish," type 3, a Roman form without any such ancestry. The imitation of Samian forms in coarse ware, also noted at Hedgerley, in types 13 and 14, is found at Fulmer only in a single example, type 5. This is without a Hedgerley parallel, and seems to owe at least as much to the Belgic girth-beaker⁴ as to Samian form 29/30.

Kilns like those at Hedgerley and the, as yet unexplored, kilns that certainly existed at Fulmer had a relatively short life, and their activity is unlikely to have extended over as much as half a century. Enough has been said in discussing each type to indicate the first half of the second century as the period to which the Fulmer industry is to be assigned. Closer dating than this must await the exploration of the kilns themselves and of the Romano-British farms in the neighbourhood.

THE WARE.

As is to be expected from a pottery site, the ware varies greatly in colour. The same clay will often produce reddish, brown, or grey ware according to temperature of firing, and the amount of carbon present in the clay itself, or produced by "fuming" or "smothering". This last results from reducing the ventilation in the kiln in the early stages

2 Fulmer. Hedgerley.
Type 3 = Type 8.
Type 8 = Type 2.
Type 12 = Type 12.
Type 13 = Type 16.

3 *Records of Bucks*, XIII, 272.

4 Cf. *Verulamium*, fig. 14, 33a, and fig. 15, 36.

of firing, so that soot is deposited on the pots. Great variety of colour is thus produced from the same clay at successive firings of the same kiln. This may sometimes be intentional, but more often appears to be an accident of firing.

The commonest colour at the Fulmer kilns is a pale grey, though reddish-brown ware, with dark grey fumed surface, also occurs.

In a few examples pale grey or white slip has been used, especially in types 8 and 12, but this is exceptional, the bulk of the ware being without either fuming or slip-coating.

The texture of the ware varies very little. It is seldom very hard, though the softness of many of the sherds may be the result of inadequate firing. This is to be expected and allowed for in dealing with "wasters" that have been discarded as failures. The ware is invariably very porous; it is rough and sandy to the touch, being charged with small crystalline particles of sand.

The majority of the vessels are unsmoothed and without decoration, though the large jars (type 12) have roughly smoothed shoulder zones which may be decorated with impressed wavy lines, or faintly burnished strokes or trellis pattern. But on the whole decoration is exceptional.

BELGIC WARE.

Several sherds were found of a very large jar, about $\frac{3}{8}$ -in. thick, in friable black ware with red-brown surface, probably once smooth and soapy to the touch, but now much perished and pitted by weathering. The ware bears a strong resemblance to that of the large jars from Belgic Verulamium. It differs from the ware of the wasters from the kilns and must be considered as a survival not associated with the local fabrics which are the subject of this paper.

TYPE 1. DISHES WITH REEDED RIMS

No complete section was obtained and the type is uncommon at Fulmer. Dishes with this form of reeded rim are less frequently found than the common carinated bowl with reeded rim, with which they are contemporary⁵. In the highland military zones of the north and west this form of rim seldom survives the reign of Trajan, but in the civil districts of the south and east it remains in use in a somewhat degenerate form until well into the Antonine period. The form, as manufactured at Verulamium, has recently been discussed by the writer⁶. No. 1 (a) closely resembles, in form though not in ware, Verulamium Type 1, N-P, while No. 1 (b) may be compared with Verulamium Type 1, Q⁷. The form does not occur either at the Hedgerley kilns, or at Hambleton. A date in the first half of the second century seems probable.

- (a) soft grey ware, containing small grains of crystalline sand. Reddish drab outer layer, probably originally covered with grey slip, but the surface has mostly perished.
- (b) Hard sandy reddish ware with fumed dark grey surface. Heavy rim with two deep grooves. This may be a carinated bowl rather than a dish. Diam. 7½ in.

TYPE 2. CARINATED BOWLS WITH FLAT REEDED RIMS

Like Type 1, with which it is contemporary, this type is of infrequent occurrence at Fulmer. The bowls appear to be more rounded than is usual with this type, and the weakness of the profile may indicate a late position in the series. All three examples illustrated are characterised by a groove around the outer edge of the rim, giving it an upturned rounded lip. 2 (b) and 2 (c) have a second groove forming a bead to the inner edge of the rim. This type occurs neither at Hedgerley nor at Hambleton. Although characteristic of the Flavian period in many parts of Britain, this form of bowl continued in use into the Antonine period in the villas and towns of the south and east⁸.

- (a) Pale grey. Ware like 1 a.
- (b) Soft sandy reddish ware, fumed dark grey. cf. 1 b. Diam. 9¼ in.
- (c) Ware as 2 b, only rather harder. Diam. not ascertainable.

TYPE 3. PIE-DISH WITH ROLL RIM

This type of dish was in widespread use in the Antonine period, when it superseded the carinated bowls and dishes

⁵ Cf. Ward, *The Roman Fort at Gellygaer, Glamorgan*, pl. 2 and 8.

⁶ *Antiq. Journ.*, XXI, pp. 273-6.

⁷ *ibid.* fig 2.

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 276, and *Norfolk Arch.*, XXI, V, 5, V, 6.

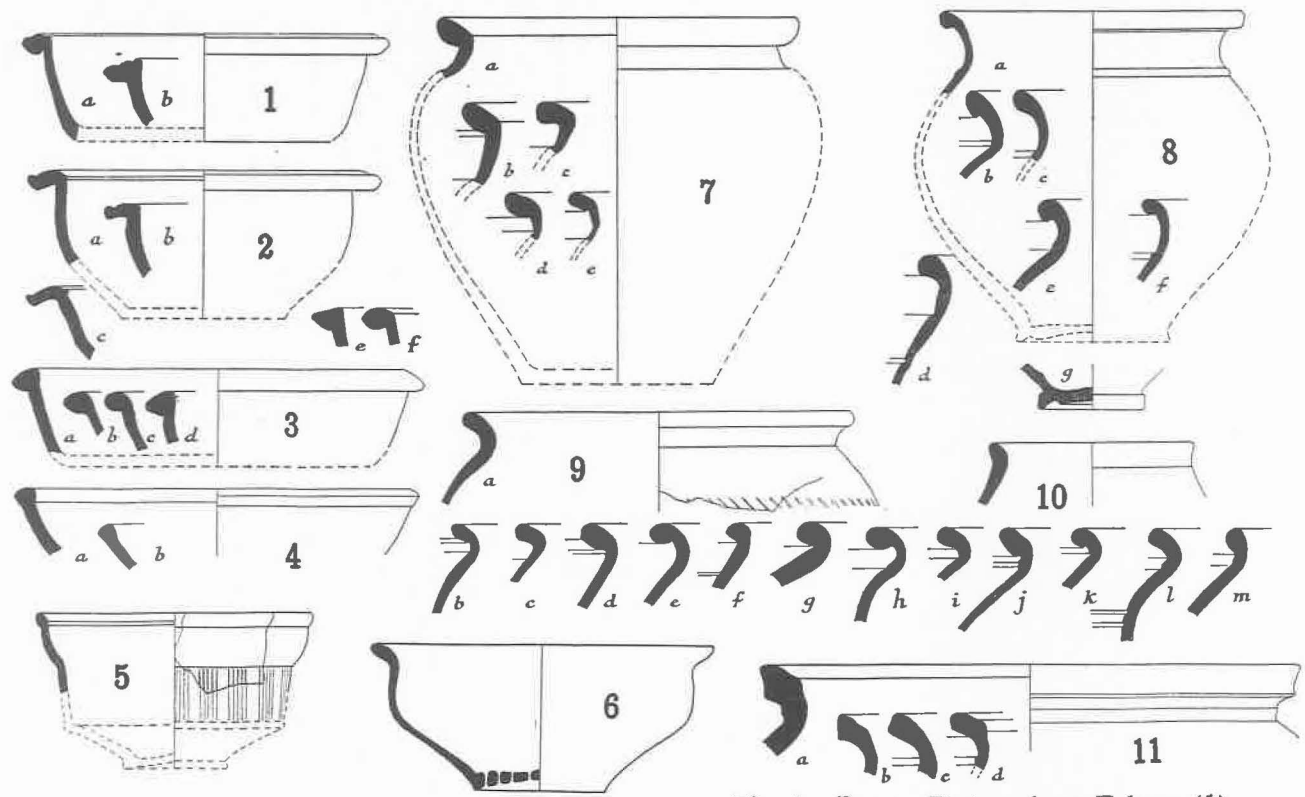


Fig. 1. Roman Pottery from Fulmer (¼).

such as Types 1 and 2. It was a common product of the Hedgerley kilns⁹, which reached their greatest activity in this period. Our examples are without the common lattice decoration, as were many of the Hedgerley dishes. At Verulamium they were manufactured at the same kilns as the carinated bowls¹⁰ which they superseded *c.* A.D. 150-160. They were also made at the kilns at Sandford, Oxon¹¹.

- (a) Soft sandy pale grey. Diam. rather uncertain. Rounded rather than bevelled at the base.
- (b and c) Similar ware.
- (d) Sandy red ware, fumed black like 1 b and 2 b.
- (e) Good hard light grey ware.
- (f) Very hard blue-grey, probably over-fired. Diam. 6in.

TYPE 4. STRAIGHT-SIDED DISHES

This type of dish is too featureless and common to be easily dated. It is uncommon on our site and was not made at Hedgerley.

- (a) Gritty reddish-buff, fumed dark grey.
- (b) Sandy brown, fumed grey surface, mostly worn off.

TYPE 5. CARINATED BOWL IMITATING SAMIAN 29/30

This is a single example, but its fabric leaves no doubt that it is a local product. It is in soft sandy grey clay, with fumed grey surface, now mostly perished. There are groups of 5 vertical combed lines around the body, by way of decoration. Such bowls occur frequently at Wroxeter in the period A.D. 80-120¹², but are more common in the latter part of the 1st century than at the beginning of the 2nd. At Verulamium they were made at the same kilns as reeded carinated bowls and roll-rim piedishes¹³, but appear to have gone out of fashion during the second quarter of the 2nd century. They were manufactured at Sandford late in the 1st or early in the 2nd century¹⁴.

TYPE 6. COLANDER

A single example in very coarse gritty ware charged with crystalline particles of sand and flecks of charcoal. It is soft pale grey with perished surface. Any bowl may be converted into a colander by drilling holes in the base or piercing them before firing, but it is usual to choose a vessel with a flat base for the purpose. The raised base of our bowl has been pierced by no less than 82 small holes.

⁹ *Records of Bucks*, XIII, 276.

¹⁰ *Antiq. Journ.*, XXI, 277-8.

¹¹ *Archaeologia*, LXXII, fig. 9, 56.

¹² *Wroxeter*, I, p. 70.

¹³ *Antiq. Journ.*, XXI, 277.

¹⁴ *Archaeol.*, LXXII, 227-8, fig. 1, 3.

TYPE 7. WIDE-MOUTHED JARS WITH SHORT NECKS

This group of jars is characterised by its heavy rim, obliquely flattened on the inside, its short neck and marked shoulder. The fact that all the examples are broken off at the junction of the neck and body points to a structural weakness in the design. It also makes the restoration of the profile of the type somewhat conjectural. The high shoulder—an early feature—seems certain, but compare Type A from the kilns at Caistor-by-Norwich¹⁵, a very similar form of jar produced during the first three decades of the 2nd century. Nothing like these jars was made at Hedgerley.

- (a) Hard gritty grey. Diam. 7½ in.
- (b) Soft sandy pale grey, very porous. Large, but too much twisted for a reliable diam. to be obtained.
- (c) Soft sandy reddish-brown. Traces of pale grey slip coating. Diam. 8¾ in.
- (d) Hard reddish-brown with purplish exterior. Diam. 8½ in.
- (e) Two fragments, one pale grey, the other reddish-grey, in soft sandy ware, and clearly from the same jar. Diam. 7½ in. Clear evidence of the unreliability of colour, particularly when dealing with "wasters."

TYPE 8. WIDE-MOUTHED ROUND-BODIED JARS WITH CORDONS AT JUNCTION OF NECK AND BODY

This form of jar is characterised by its roll-rim, often slightly undercut, and short, somewhat concave neck, separated by a cordon or ledge (really a degenerate cordon) from the rounded body. The base is generally slightly raised, having a groove around the under edge, which produces a footing upon which the vessel stands.

This Roman development of a Belgic prototype seems to have been in widespread use in the Belgic area late in the 1st century and increasingly in the first half of the 2nd century. Our form closely resembles Hedgerley, Type 2¹⁶, though half our examples preserve the degenerate cordon at the neck, like that of Hedgerley, Type 1. The development of the form may be conveniently studied at Verulamium, from Claudian times¹⁷, throughout the second century¹⁸. A very similar form of jar in hard thin buff ware was mass-produced at Verulamium in the Hadrian-Antonine period¹⁹, and was in common use as a cinerary urn in the St. Stephen's Cemetery there²⁰. Although no complete outline was recovered of our Fulmer type, there

¹⁵ *J.R.S.*, XXII, pl. VII.

¹⁶ *Records of Bucks.*, XIII, 273, pl. IX.

¹⁷ *Verulamium*, lg. 36, 74, 75.

¹⁸ *ibid.* fig. 35, 66, and fig. 33, 50, and *Archaeol.* LXXXIV, fig. 10, 6.

¹⁹ *Antiq. Journ.*, XXI, 283-7.

²⁰ *St. Albans & Herts. A.A. Trans.*, 1935, fig. 19 and 20.

is no reason to doubt that these general-purposes jars were being made here and at Hedgerley at the same time.

- (a) Soft sandy drab, with faint traces of pale grey slip coating. Diam. $6\frac{1}{2}$ in.
- (b) Sandy pale grey. Traces of light grey slip. Diam $7\frac{3}{4}$ in.
- (c) Light red. Thin pale grey slip coating. Diam. 8in.
- (d) Hard sandy grey. Traces of pale grey slip. Diam. $7\frac{3}{4}$ in.
- (e) Hard sandy grey. Diam. $6\frac{7}{8}$ in.
- (f) Gritty red-buff. Traces of pale grey slip. Diam. $7\frac{3}{4}$ in.
- (g) Part of the base of a jar of this form. Gritty red-brown with fumed black surface.

TYPE 9. MISCELLANEOUS JARS

Although jars with rims so various in detail as these can hardly be classed as a type, they are alike in being all of local fabric, having relatively wide mouths, little or no neck, and no shoulder.

- (a) Coarse sandy pale grey. Traces of scored oblique lines (or lattice?) around the upper body.
- (b) Coarse sandy pale grey; short vertical neck. Diam $5\frac{1}{2}$ in.
- (c) Coarse sandy dull red with fumed dark grey surface. Diam. $6\frac{1}{2}$ in.
- (d) Coarse sandy pale grey. Diam. $7\frac{3}{4}$ in.
- (e) Pale grey, less gritty than a-d. Diam. $6\frac{3}{4}$ in.
- (f) Hard rough grey. Diam. $6\frac{1}{2}$ in.
- (g) Large, but diam. uncertain. Very coarse sandy gritty ware.
- (h) Hard rough blue-grey, overbaked and twisted. Diam. $6\frac{3}{4}$ in.
- (i) Hard sandy pale grey. Twisted.
- (j) Sandy drab, with reddish layer beneath the surface. Rather smoother than most of the others. Diam. $5\frac{1}{2}$ in.
- (k) Hard sandy grey-brown, with red layer beneath the surface, as in j. Diam $6\frac{3}{8}$ in.
- (l) Hard sandy grey, twisted, but diam. c. $7\frac{3}{4}$ in.
- (m) Sandy hard grey. Large, but diam. uncertain.

TYPE 10. BEAKER

This is a single example. Pale grey gritty ware.

TYPE 11. HEAVY STORAGE JARS WITH ANGULAR RIM

These are Romanized descendants of the common Belgic storage jar, such as those found at Belgic Verulamium²¹. The

²¹ *Verulamium*, fig. 18, 60a, and fig. 19, 60b.

rectangular rim of our examples is found in the 2nd-3rd century at Verulamium²², though no evidence survives to indicate that ours preserved the horizontal rilling of the Belgic prototype. A similar large jar with rectangular rim was found at Hambleden²³. It is noteworthy that all our examples, although in local fabric, charged with crystalline sandy particles, retain the reddish colour, with fumed grey to black surface, of their Belgic ancestors.

- (a) Coarse brick red, with fumed dark grey surface. Grooved as if to take a lid.
- (b) Hard gritty dark red, with fumed black surface. Diam. 8½ in.
- (c) Very similar to b, but diam. uncertain.
- (d) Gritty and hard dull purple. Diam. 9 in.

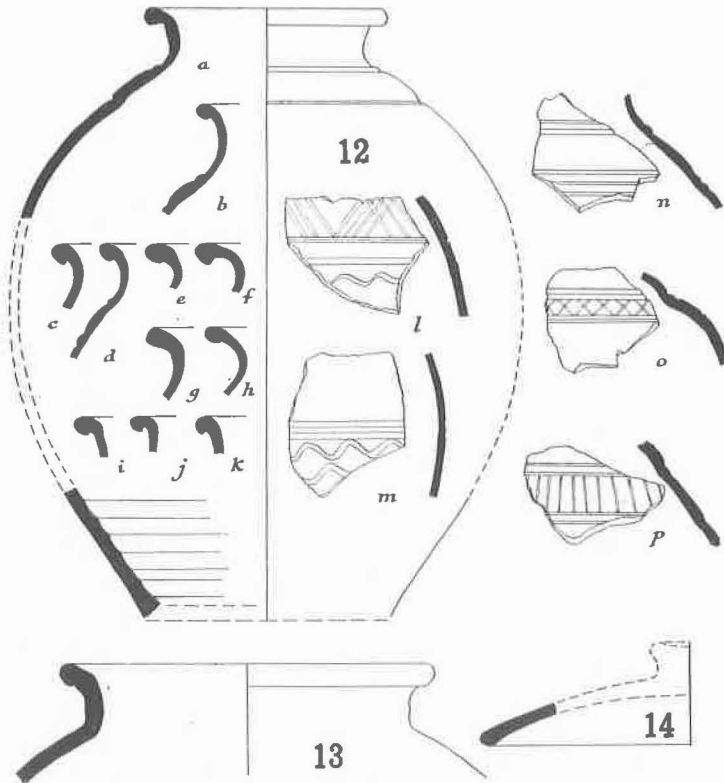


Fig. 2. Roman Pottery from Fulmer (¼).

²² *ibid.*, fig. 37, 76.

²³ *Archaeol.*, LXXI, fig. 16, 159.

TYPE 12. LARGE NARROW-NECKED JARS WITH CORDON AT JUNCTION OF NECK AND BODY, AND BAND, OFTEN DECORATED ON SHOULDER

This form of jar, like Type 8, which it often accompanies, is descended from a common Belgic prototype²⁴. Similar cordoned jars, with decorated bands round the body occur all over the province from the Claudian period²⁵, in the second half of the 1st century²⁶, in the early 2nd century²⁷. They were made at the local kilns at Silchester²⁸, while similar jars were manufactured at Hedgerley²⁹. Our jars would appear to fall late in the series, and to belong to the first half of the 2nd century. Compared with other types from the Fulmer kilns they are hard, relatively thin, and in unfumed grey ware. As is usual in the type, some bear zones of decoration with faintly burnished lines, impressed wavy lines, or both, on shoulder or body.

- (a) Hard sandy pale grey ware. Narrow neck with everted rim with a cordon at the junction of neck and body. A plain shoulder zone is separated from the body by a deep groove. The rim, neck and upper part of the body, to about an inch below the shoulder groove, are smoothed, the body being left very rough. Variations in rim section are shown in b-h. All are in similar grey ware, which does not call for separate description. Diameters are as follows:—
- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| (b) 4in. | (f) 5½in. |
| (c) 4in. | (g) 5¼in. |
| (d) 5¼in. | (h) 4¼in. |
| (e) 5¼in. | |

Rims i-k differ from the rest in being sharply undercut, but, in all probability they belong to similar jars.

- (i) Gritty grey with traces of white slip. Diam. 4¾in.
 (j) Gritty red-brown, with traces of orange slip. Diam. 5¼in.
 (k) Grey-drab with traces of white slip. Diam. 5½in.
 The majority of these pots are undecorated like Type 12 at Hedgerley³⁰, which they closely resemble. Faintly burnished lines do, however, occur, usually on the shoulder zone, while sherds showing one or more wavy lines from the body of large jars, probably of this form, are illustrated in (l) and (m). Dr. Wheeler

²⁴ *Verulamium*, fig. 16, types 45 a and b, 46 a and b.

²⁵ *Richborough*, I, pl. XX, 4.

²⁶ *Margidunum*, *J.R.S.*, XXXI, fig. 11, nos. 11, 14; *Newstead*, pl. xlvii, 38; *Verulamium*, fig. 34, 61.

²⁷ *Gellygaer*, pl. II, type 4; *Brecon*, fig. 95, C6; *Verulamium*, fig. 35, 62.

²⁸ *Silchester Pottery*, lxxvi, 9, 10.

²⁹ *Records of Bucks*, XIII, 274.

³⁰ *ibid.* p. 278.

found chronological significance in this form of decoration at Brecon³¹, but whether this be so or not, it is quite untrue for other parts of Britain, where wavy impressed lines are a common form of decoration in all periods, particularly in the late 4th century in parts of the north.

- (l) Sherd from side of large jar. Hard sandy dark grey. On a smoothed band between grooves groups of four faintly burnished lines arranged chevron-wise. Single deeply impressed wave below.
- (m) Hard sandy grey, with reddish sandy surface. Double impressed wavy lines below two faint grooves.
- (n) Undecorated shoulder of a jar of type 12. Good hard grey ware with pale grey slip coating. Well-marked cordon separating neck and shoulder, and three grooves beneath plain shoulder zone, giving the effect of a double cordon.
- (o) Hard sandy pale grey. Faint trellis on shoulder between double grooves, forming shallow cordons.
- (p) Pale sandy grey. Faintly burnished vertical lines on shoulder zone between double grooves, giving the effect of shallow cordons.
Very faint intersecting wavy lines appear on the shoulder zone of d.

TYPE 13. LARGE JAR

A single example, resembling Hedgerley Type 16³². Soft sandy light red, showing traces of grey slip.

TYPE 14. LID

Very few lids were found, and most consisted of small sherds only. On the analogy of the local pottery at Verulamium, jars of Type 8 and often bowls of Type 2 would be used with lids³³. The example illustrated is in local grey ware and calls for no comment.

³¹ Wheeler, *The Roman Fort at Brecon*, p. 231, quoted in the Hedgerley report, p. 277.

³² *Records of Bucks*, XIII, p. 276 and 278.

³³ *Antiq. Journ.*, XXI, p. 292, fig. 5.