

**Pots that tell a story:
the Jonathan Horne Collection of early stonewares acquired by the Ashmolean**

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For some years, visitors to Room 40 in the European Ceramics Gallery at the Ashmolean will have been aware of a closely related group of early English brown salt-glazed stonewares deposited on loan by the well-known dealer Jonathan Horne (1); visitors are probably unaware that Horne's intention was for the collection to find its permanent home there after being accepted in lieu of Inheritance Tax. To build up a collection of such rarities today, guided by the taxonomic principles adopted by serious museum curators, would be an impossible task; but happily Jonathan Horne, during four decades of very successful trading, possessed exactly the clear vision, sharp eye and hunting instinct, coupled with patience, required to assemble a unique group of interrelated early stonewares. After his death in 2010 and recently that of his widow Rachel, the collection will now remain together, continue to teach and serve as a testament to a remarkably talented dealer, collector and scholar.



1.

Jonathan Kenneth Horne was born on 13 November 1940, the son of playwright Kenneth Horne, and educated at Whitgift School in Croydon, where he developed a consuming interest in archaeology and satisfied an inherited theatrical streak by joining the Honourable Artillery Regiment in 1958. After a false start as a trainee at Selfridges, he branched out into the uncertain world of antique dealing by taking a stall in Portobello Road in 1968, using his unerring eye and engaging personality to such good effect that after a mere five years he earned membership of the British Antique Dealers' Association. Permanent premises were found at 66c Kensington Church Street in 1976, where he specialized in English and Continental pottery and particularly tiles, holding exhibitions from March 1981, accompanied by neat catalogues styled 'A Collection of English Pottery'. As a founder member and later Vice President of the Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology established in 1967, he maintained healthy links between the worlds of antique dealing, museum curatorship, excavation and research.

Keen to encourage and record further research, which would in turn expand the knowledge available to both trade and public and generate positive publicity, he began by subsidising Frank Britton's *London Delftware* in 1986 before formally establishing Jonathan Horne Publications the following year. Future publications included David Barker's *William Greatbatch. A Staffordshire Potter* (1991), John C Austin's *British Delft at Williamsburg* (1994), Anthony Ray's *Liverpool Printed Tiles* (1994), Gordon Elliott's *John and David Elers and their Contemporaries* (1998), Leslie B Grigsby's *The Longridge Collection of English Slipware and Delftware* 2 volumes (2000), Peter Francis's *Irish Delftware, an Illustrated History* (2000), Anthony Ray's *English Delftware in the Ashmolean Museum* (2000), Arthur MacGregor's *The Ashmolean Museum. A brief History of the Institution and its Collections* (2001) and Mary M Brooks's *English Embroideries of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries in the Collection of the Ashmolean Museum* (2004).

Horne's interests in London's ceremonial activities went hand-in-hand with his rapid success in the trade, when he was elected to serve as Elder Drumbeater in the Company of Pikemen and

Musketeers in 1978, after which he was an early exhibitor at the newly founded Ceramics Fair & Seminar in 1982, partook in the New York Antique Dealers Show and in 2001 relaunched and enlarged the catalogues for his annual exhibitions under the title 'Jonathan Horne. English Pottery and related Works of Art'. Further pinnacles of his success included being elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 2003, at that time a rare privilege for a dealer, even with full backing from David Gaimster, who had graduated from the British Museum to become Secretary of the Antiquaries. Horne's ultimate accolade was to serve as Chairman of the British Antiques Dealers Association from 2001 to 2004.

As an aside, some measure of Jonathan Horne's status in the antique dealers' world at this period may be gleaned from the fact that, along with the smaller scale but equally prestigious dealership of Garry Atkins across the road in Kensington Church Street, he was seen as the funnel through which most decent English pottery passed, either through auctions, private sales or being approached by an army of opportunistic 'runners'. The need for good pottery with which to supply wealthy collectors in America such as Henry Weldon (now at Colonial Williamsburg) and Syd Levethan (now styled The Longridge Collection) was apparently limitless. After the raising of the *Mary Rose* in 1982, the V&A had been persuaded to lend to Portsea Museum a fine Cologne brown salt-glazed stoneware mug with Bartmann mask and applied oak leaves, salvaged long ago from near the site of the shipwreck. One day in 2002 news reached the V&A Ceramics Department that the mug had been stolen the day before, which prompted an urgent telephone call to Jonathan Horne to warn him to keep a lookout. After describing the pot from a photograph, we compared notes in ever-increasing detail, until Jonathan finally had to admit that he was actually holding it in his hand and that the supposed owner was returning shortly to discuss a possible sale. Suffice it to say that it is now back on display in the V&A.

Besides marching on fifty-one occasions at the Lord Mayor's Parade and becoming a Liveryman of the Stationers' Company, Horne was very conscious that none of the London Livery Companies specifically catered for art historians or antique dealers. So, with his contacts, wide experience and naturally persuasive nature, he set about founding a Company himself, eventually settling on the inclusive name Arts Scholars, Dealers and Collectors. This achieved guild status in 2005 with Horne first acting as Honorary Founder and Clerk, then becoming its second Master in 2008/09. The Guild graduated to a Company Without Livery in 2010 and finally to a fully fledged Worshipful Company of Arts Scholars in 2014.

The death of Horne's friend and rival dealer Alistair Sampson in 2006 triggered a new phase, beginning with a merger with Sampson's business at 120 Mount Street, trading as Sampson & Horne under the management of Christopher Banks. A late triumph was an exhibition entitled *Pirates of the East End*, which highlighted artefacts from residences of known pirates in Limehouse. But with failing health, Horne first moved to smaller premises at Brooks Mews, then consigned the joint stock to a grand sale at Bonhams on 28 April 2010, entitled 'The Sampson and Horne Collection. Defining the Vernacular'. He received the MBE shortly before he died on 25 June 2010, but just missed the publication in 2011 of the magnificent Festschrift compiled in his honour: *This Blessed Plot, This Earth. English Pottery Studies in Honour of Jonathan Horne* (edited by Amanda Dunsmore). The funeral at St Botolph without Bishopsgate on 16 July 2010 and reception at the Honourable Artillery Company were memorable affairs packed with representatives from the many parts of his life, carried out with all the pomp and precision that Horne would have expected.

Early in his career as a dealer Jonathan Horne focused on the achievements of the founder of the Fulham Pottery, John Dwight, as patentee and supposedly first maker of salt-glazed stoneware in England. Horne's early success as a dealer allowed him to retain some pieces for his own collection, consisting of great rarities that provided a typology of early Fulham products, as well as examples of the much rarer stonewares produced before and during the peak of Dwight's

manufacture in the late 17C. As Dwight's life has been extensively studied and published¹, a brief account here will suffice.

From a humble background, Dwight was enabled to study 'Civil Law and physic a little, but most Chemistry' at Oxford, where he worked in the laboratories of Robert Hooke and Robert Boyle. Suitably qualified, he took a position as secretary to the Bishop of Chester, after which he gained promotion until in 1665 he became Registrar for the Diocese, living at Wigan, where he set up a laboratory to unravel the secret of making salt-glazed stoneware. This involved the combination of suitable high-firing clay with a wood-fired kiln capable of reaching a temperature of about 1,200–1,400°C to vitrify the clay and vapourise the rock salt to form the glaze. After falling out with a later bishop, he sold his ecclesiastical appointments, moved to London and, encouraged by Hooke and Boyle, built a pottery at Fulham. On 23 April 1672 he obtained a patent for 'Earthenware commonly known by the names of Porcelane or China and Persian Ware as also ... the stoneware vulgarly known as Cologne ware'. An agreement to supply the GlassSellers Company in 1676 guaranteed the pottery's future, after which Dwight renewed his patent two years early in 1684 to include 'white gorges, marbled Porcelane Vessel ... fine stone gorges', and then proceeded ruthlessly to pursue those who infringed the patent until it finally expired in 1698. When Dwight died in 1703, the pottery was well established but found itself in competition with other stoneware makers both in London and Nottingham and later in Staffordshire.

Much of Horne's collection was already in his possession when he put on a narrowly focused stoneware exhibition in 1985 as a counterpart to the simultaneous but more general *Browne Muggs* exhibition at the V&A². The ambitious and finely illustrated catalogue 'English Brown Stoneware from the 17th and 18th Centuries' covered not only Fulham but other makers attempting to flout Dwight's patent, together with the rather different products of Nottingham and Staffordshire. Drawing heavily on borrowed excavated wasters, the exhibition paid homage



2. Bottle made at Woolwich c1650–60 WA2025.

to early attempts to make brown stoneware in England and revealed Jonathan Horne's passion for combining historical research with excavation and for tracking down matching pieces of pottery that might have survived above ground. The earliest phase consisted of an attempt by unknown Rhineland potters to make Cologne-type utilitarian brown stonewares at Woolwich³, a chance discovery for which there is no documentation, and where subsequent analysis proved the use of clay imported from Germany. The idiosyncratic features of the many misfired wasters were found on only one complete bottle in the Museum of London, but later two matching bottles were dredged up off the coast at Folkestone and Jonathan Horne had the opportunity to acquire them⁴, one being sold to the V&A in 1995 and the other added to his own collection (2). Although this may represent a false start in the development of stoneware production, it demonstrates that in the 1650s German potters considered it worthwhile to try to bypass the Netherlandish trade by shipping their stonewares from the Rhine to be potted in England, even with imported clay.

From Dwight's litigation during the period 1693–96 it was known from the testimony of one of his potters, Daniel Parker, that Simon Wooltus had made 'Stone Gorges Muggs & Canns' at Southampton, and that his son Simon had made stoneware for a certain Mr Killigrew at Chelsea around 1670. Although no products of this venture had been identified in time for Horne's 1985 exhibition, subsequent research⁵ shows that William Killigrew had applied for a stoneware patent a mere thirteen days after the granting of Dwight's in 1672 and that a group of related stonewares mostly found around Southampton may be attributed to

his pottery, presumably made by the hands of the German potters Simon Wooltus, father and son. Dennis Haselgrove has positively identified the Horne example (3), which had been used as a witch bottle to ward off evil spirits, as a Killigrew product, and through Jonathan Horne in 1995 the V&A was able to acquire another poorly fired example with a medallion dated 1674. This had suddenly resurfaced, having disappeared after its exhibition at the Society of Antiquaries in 1894.

The full extent of Dwight's achievements was revealed by excavations at the Fulham Pottery in 1971–79, with a comprehensive report by Chris Green⁶ (in which Horne collaborated) finally published in 1999. Stoneware ale bottles were the staple product, and although Horne had borrowed Mavis Bimson's very desirable bottle with a cock medallion with 'HC' for Henry Crosse, landlord of the Cock Ale House at Temple Bar frequented by Samuel Pepys, when the Bimson Collection was finally sold⁷, it was bought by Garry Atkins. Meanwhile Horne had already acquired a comparable bottle with the Eagle & Child and initials WG (4) that adequately represents the type. The other Dwight bottle in Horne's collection was a unique gallon size bearing the Royal Arms (5), which shows Dwight's bottle production at its very best, the potting, glazing and design much superior to any contemporary imported Cologne products. Although an exactly matching medallion was among 460 Royal Arms fragments excavated at Fulham, surprisingly no other complete bottles with this device have survived: which in turn raises interesting questions about popularity versus survival. Another unique wide-mouthed bottle or serving jug (6) matches a few Fulham fragments, but as a close copy of a standard imported Cologne pot of the late 16C or early 17C it may have been made in very limited quantities to test the market for any lingering desire for outdated but traditional types. This object, like the Killigrew bottle (above), also owes its survival to the fact that it had been used as a witch bottle inserted into the clunch wall of a cottage in Cambridgeshire.



3. Bottle made by Killigrew c1675
WA2025.25



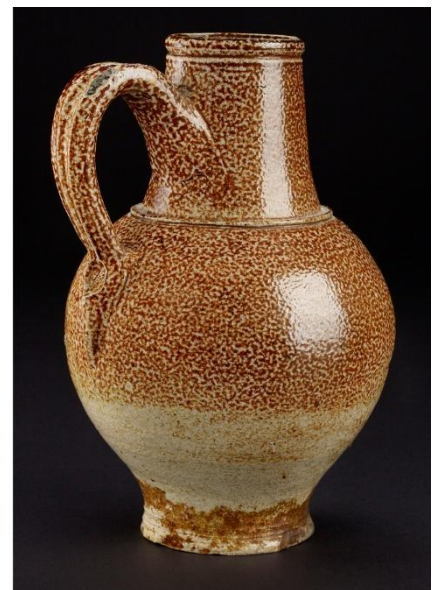
4.

4. Bottle with Eagle & Child medallion, made at John Dwight's Fulham Pottery c1675 WA2025.22



5.

5. 'Gallon' bottle with Royal Arms of Charles II, made at John Dwight's Fulham Pottery c1680 WA2025.23



6.

6. Ale mug or jug, made at John Dwight's Fulham Pottery c1680 WA2025.20

Of Dwight's inventions listed by his renewed patent in 1684, examples of the 'white Gorges' (small mugs for strong ale, with globular body and cylindrical, reeded necks) were already to be found in the British Museum, the Fitzwilliam, the V&A (where a pair of gorges in the Schreiber Collection had silver mounts dated 1682) and another pair in the Mint Museum, Charlotte, North Carolina. But Horne managed to acquire a later white-slipped fineware quart tankard with silver mount and iron-dipped rim (7) which, before publication of the Fulham excavations, and following Arnold Mountford's attribution⁸ of a similar example in the Potteries Museum, had been exhibited in his 1985 show as Staffordshire. Drawings of both these mugs were used by Chris Green⁹. Dated to between 1695 and 1710, such refined white Fulham mugs were made for wealthy domestic use and are not found with the stamped excise marks introduced by the Act of 1700. As the earliest reference to Staffordshire white stoneware was by the dealer John Akerman in 1719, there remains an unexplained gap between its perfection at Fulham and its reinvention in Staffordshire, and speculation as to whether there was any direct connection between the two.



7. Ale mug with white-slipped body, made at John Dwight's Fulham Pottery c1700–10 WA2025.24

As for the 'marbled Porcelane Vessels' mentioned in the renewed patent in 1684, these were extremely rare, represented only by two fine marbled gorges in the British Museum. Horne did, however, get his hands on one of the experimental marbled stoneware gorges made by the artist Francis Place in Yorkshire probably in the 1680s–90s which, evidently much too valuable to keep, found a new home in the Mellanay Delhom Collection¹⁰. The four surviving Francis Place mugs do not, however, play a significant role in the development of brown stoneware in England and curiously Place's marbling is applied to the surface rather than using Dwight's wedged agate marbled clay body.

Some types of stoneware which Dwight attempted to make never reached the production stage. For example, the copies of Westerwald stoneware mugs with applied sprigged decoration coloured with cobalt blue and manganese purple are known only from excavation, all having suffered from firing problems. They are however represented in the V&A by fragmentary excavated mugs given to Lady Charlotte Schreiber in 1866.

Another typical late 17C ale tankard form was cylindrical with two bands of ribbing at top and bottom (8), a type with the same angular tapered rim as used in Germany to accommodate the customary metal lid. Usefully, these Fulham or London tavern mugs can all be dated pre-1700 since none have been found with impressed crowned 'WR' excise marks, as enforced by the Act for *Ascertaining the Measures for retailing Ale and Beer* that became operative in September 1700. This type of beer mug with thin cylindrical lathe-turned body and bands of ribbing at top and bottom was adopted and produced in large numbers by Nottingham potters, depicted on James Morley's c1700 trade card as 'A Mogg'; dated examples range from 1700 to 1725. The diagnostic Fulham conjoined 'WR' excise mark is also found under the lower handle terminal of a typical brown gorge (9), confirming that the globular gorge with ribbed neck continued in use from the 1680s to the 1720s. Its fate was sealed, however, by the difficulty in producing an accurate capacity with such a shape, as opposed to the cylindrical mug, where a predetermined width, height and body thickness, with an allowance for shrinkage during the firing, could provide absolute consistency on the potter's wheel.



8.



9.



10.

8. Ale mug made at John Dwight's Fulham Pottery c1680–1700 WA2025.21

9. Ale mug or *gorge* made at John Dwight's Fulham Pottery c1700–10 WA2025.18

10. Ale mug dated 1703 made at John Dwight's Fulham Pottery WA2025.19

Horne also acquired the earliest dated tavern mug (**10**), inscribed 'Simon Enoch at Mortlock 1703' and bearing a typical Fulham excise mark 'AR' as mistakenly used after the accession of Queen Anne in 1703 (the *William III Act* of 1700 having specified a crowned 'WR' mark). Genealogical notes on the Enoch family were included with this interesting mug, which was also drawn and used by Chris Green¹¹. By contrast, a half-pint tavern mug with a possible Fulham-type WR excise mark (**11**) illustrates the typical type made by all London stoneware potteries after Dwight's death in 1703. This particular mug, dating from the first half of the 18C, was apparently commissioned by somebody with the initials 'J W', quite possibly the landlord of a public house. Two fine one-pint tankards with silver rims and white wax-resist applied medallions on a dark brown dipped body complete Horne's typology of Fulham mugs. Both have 'AR' excise marks under the handle terminal, one has a medallion with floral design (**12**) and the other depicts Britannia (**13**). When the latter was shown in Horne's 1985 exhibition, it was attributed to Staffordshire by comparison with a similar quart mug illustrated by Mountford¹² which, however, carries on the front a wax-resist applied 'WR' excise mark, of typical conjoined Fulham type. Drawings of the two Horne mugs, as well as a fragmentary example with floral medallion at the Ashmolean, were used by Chris Green to illustrate surviving mugs that matched the Fulham fragments¹³. Almost an afterthought, the Horne gift includes a typical double-walled Nottingham



11.



12.



13.

11. Small ale mug inscribed 'JW' made in London c1720–40 WA2025.17

12. Brown-dipped ale mug with floral medallion, made at John Dwight's Fulham Pottery c1705–10 WA2025.16

13. Brown-dipped ale mug with medallion of Britannia, made at John Dwight's Fulham Pottery c1705–10 WA2025.15

'Carved Jug' (14) as depicted on James Morley's trade card of c1700¹⁴. From the survival rate, it would appear that these were made in considerable numbers, with many examples in private collections as well as at Nottingham Castle Museum, the V&A, the British Museum and the Fitzwilliam – but none, surprisingly, at the Ashmolean, where it has filled a major gap.

Jonathan Horne chose to patronize the Ashmolean partly because of his admiration for one of Oxford's hugely talented alumni, John Dwight, whose meticulous scientific research and experiments so nearly succeeded in producing Europe's first hard-paste porcelain. And partly because Horne was aware that the Ashmolean's collections were not as balanced as they might be, even with highlights such as the Rissik Marshall Collection of Worcester porcelain and the Hall Warren Collection of English delftware, while other major museums, perhaps better funded, had been able to systematically build up their collections. The V&A had benefited from Lady Charlotte Schreiber's gift of Dwight pieces excavated at Fulham, the British Museum holdings included important early Fulham material, and the Fitzwilliam Museum had the outstanding pottery collection donated by Dr Glaisher in 1928. The acquisition of Horne's collection has now greatly helped to redress the imbalance and enables the Ashmolean to play an important role in tracing the development of salt-glazed stoneware in England.



14. Double-walled ale mug, *Carved Jug*, made at Nottingham c1700 WA2025.27

Notes

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9. Green, C, 1999, Fig109
10. *British Ceramics 1675-1825*, The Mint Museum, Charlotte, NC, 2015, Cat. No 66
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14. Oswald, A, 'A Ceramic Mystery – Nottingham Carved Ware', *ECC Trans* Vol14, Pt 3 1992
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