

# INSCRIBED AND DATED POTS OF THE EIGHTEENTH & NINETEENTH CENTURIES FROM BRILL, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

MICHAEL FARLEY AND BARBARA HURMAN

The importance of the mediaeval pottery industry at Brill has long been appreciated, but the considerable output of the post-mediaeval industry had been largely overlooked until the discovery of kilns of this period in 1974 and 1975.<sup>1</sup> Brill was amongst the longest-lived pottery making centres in the country, being in existence for at least six hundred years, but by the late eighteenth century, if not earlier, the industry was in decline. From this late phase, four complete, dated, inscribed vessels survive accompanied by two others thought to be Brill products, and these are illustrated here. The Brill brickyards – which are responsible for the substantial pits to the north of the village – appear to have continued to flourish as the pottery industry declined. The Hubbock family were wisely involved in both sides of the industry and the ‘lamp’ stand (Fig 1, 5) is described as having been actually made by Thomas Hubbocks ‘in the brickyard’. All of the pots illustrated are on loan to Buckinghamshire County Museum from the Ashmolean Museum except No. 1, which belongs to the Museum.

1. Handled pot. Complete with a single ribbed handle, yellow-green slip internally and externally. Body brick red. Inscribed on the front of the vessel before slipping are the letters ‘M M 1764’, and on the unslipped base are the words ‘John Shiperle pter Brill Bux’. This vessel is referred to in V.C.H. *Bucks* II, (1908), 114–5, but the surname has been misread as ‘Shepherde’. The name Shipperley is still common in the village. (County Museum).
2. Large lidded storage vessel. Complete, with perforated knobbed lid. The pot is glazed internally and externally with a clear glaze firing brown with traces of green and flecks of iron. There is a small bung-hole at the base. Two large horizontal flange handles on the shoulder (one missing). Inscribed on the front ‘Thomas Hubbocks Brill 1791’ and on the lid ‘T H 1791’. (Ashmolean Museum, 1909. 964).
3. Money box. Clear glaze firing yellow except the underside which has a black ink curvise inscription ‘Mrs. Smith Feb. 21st 1823 Money Pott’. Off-white body. The attached label states ‘Bought at Brill from Mrs. Smith’s grand-daughter c. 1900’. Although it is impossible to be certain that this is a Brill product it was apparently believed to be so when it was collected. (Ashmolean Musuem, 1921. 214)
4. Small handled jug. Yellow slip all over, crazed, on buff – bricky red body. Inscription incised on the front before slipping. ‘Eliza Barnet 1837’. Although it is impossible to be certain that this is a Brill product it was apparently believed to be so when collected, and its fabric is comparable. (Ashmolean Museum, 1921. 215).

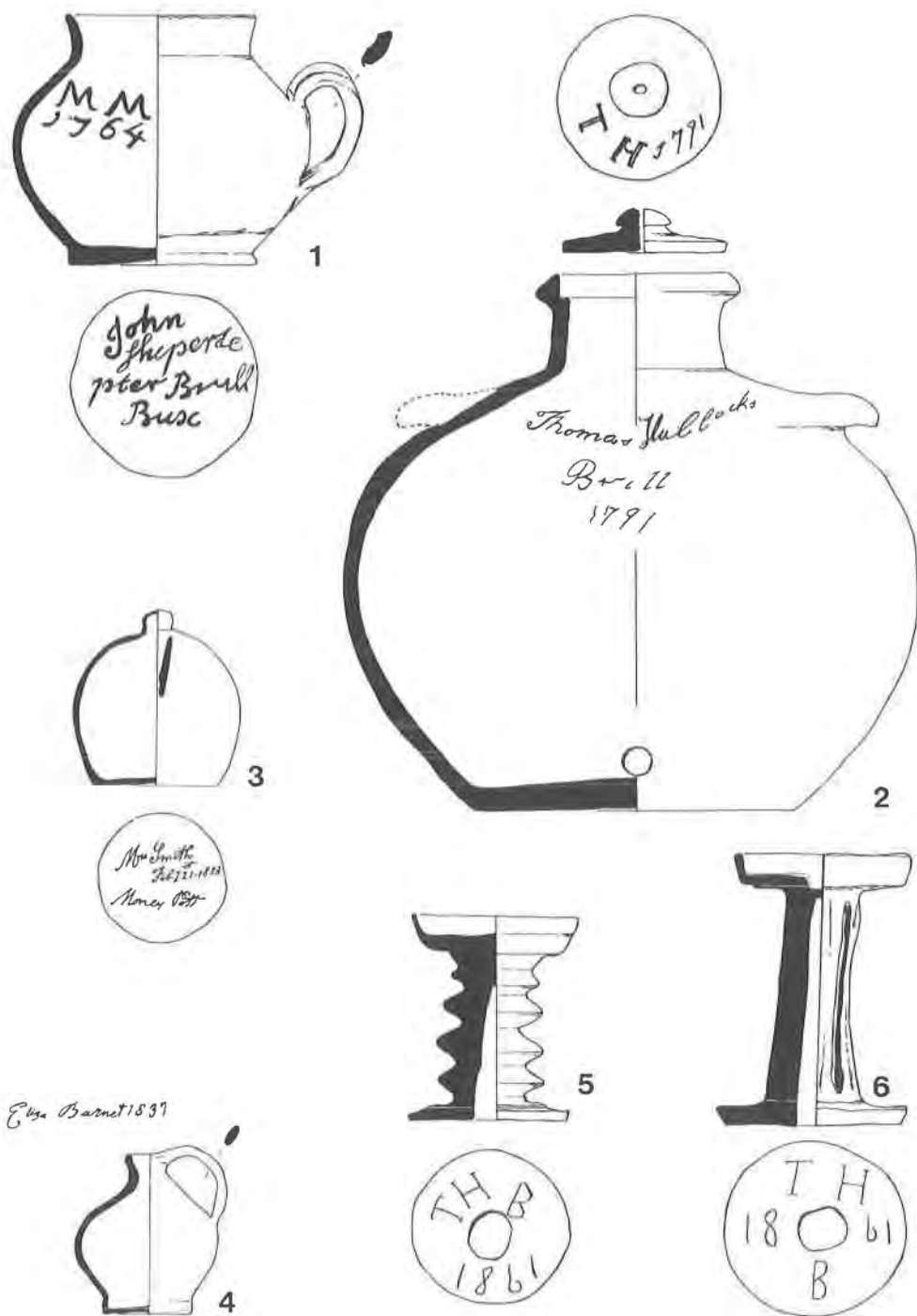


Fig. 1. Pottery from Brill, all 1/4 except 2, 1/6.

5. 'Lampstand'. The stand is crudely made, heavy with a shallow dish on a hollow stem, narrowing to the top internally. It has a yellowy-brown glaze except on the underside of the base. The latter is very irregular and was clearly separately applied. The body is fine, white/buff. The stand has an attached label 'Lampstand made in the brick-yard at Brill'. Inscribed in capitals on base 'T H B 1861' (Thomas Hubbocks Brill, 1861). It is not obvious what form of lamp such a stand would support. (Ashmolean Museum, 1921.240).
6. 'Lampstand'. A second stand inscribed on the base in identical manner to 5, and in similar fabric and glaze. Both top and base were clearly separately applied and the base was probably coiled. Four irregular slices have been cut from the hollow stem, two straight and two sinuous and the stem is also knife trimmed in places. The whole is slipped pale brown with iron speckling. (Ashmolean Museum, 1921. 239).

1. Farley, M. E., 'Pottery and Pottery Kilns of the Post-Medieval period at Brill, Buckinghamshire', *Post. Med. Arch.* 13 (1979), 127-152.