

Clay tobacco pipes (CTP) are a common find on post-medieval sites in London and on the Thames foreshore and may be treated disparagingly by some archaeologists. However they are an extremely useful dating tool as well as providing a tangible link to the individuals whose houses and rubbish pits we dig up.

By c.1580 pipes made of fine white ball clay were increasingly used to smoke tobacco or 'drink' it as it was then known. The pipes consist of a bowl, a stem, and the mouthpiece moulded from a single piece of clay. The stem was often 10-15cm, but could be up to 90cm.

The pipes were produced in moulds and then trimmed and finished by hand before firing in a kiln. The size and shape of the pipes change over time, and local variations developed. The increasing size of the bowl has been ascribed to falling tobacco prices after 1620, whilst at the same time stems often increased in length.

The maker's initials or an emblem was often moulded or stamped on the pipe, often on the heel or side of the spur, the back of the bowl or on the stem. Stamps were either incise or relief. Higher quality pipes were often burnished after finishing. Pipe bowls could be finished with milling or rouletting around the outside of the bowl rim. 19<sup>th</sup> century pipes could be extremely ornate, and occasionally were painted.

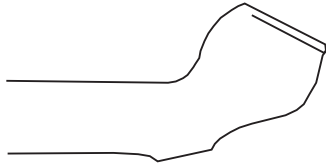
Specific forms of pipe have been accurately dated by association with other finds, especially assemblages of ceramics, and with documentary records of pipe makers. The use of moulds, changes in pipe form, combined with the use of makers' marks, decoration and the fragility and short life-span of the pipes combine to make pipes an extremely valuable dating tool, as well as being of intrinsic interest as often beautiful objects. Pipe studies also help us understand the production methods of pipe manufacture, their trade and trade routes, and the role of smoking and leisure time in post-medieval life.

## Typology

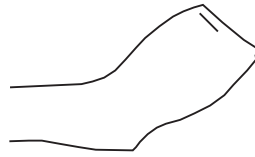
London pipes were originally classified according to a typology produced by Atkinson and Oswald in 1969; such forms are referred to by their 'AO' number, the date ranges are approximate and further forms and variants are now recognised. The 1969 typology reproduced in this handout and is still of use in dating pipes but is not definitive. In 1975 Oswald produced a national **Simplified General Typology**.

London Clay Tobacco Pipes (after Atkinson and Oswald 1969)

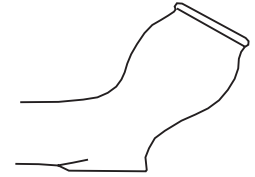
AO1 (1580-1610)



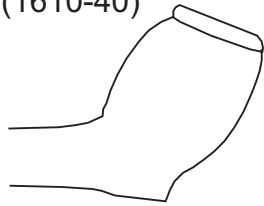
AO2 (1580-1610)



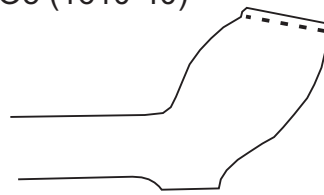
AO3 (1580-1610)



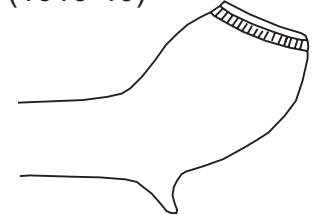
AO4 (1610-40)



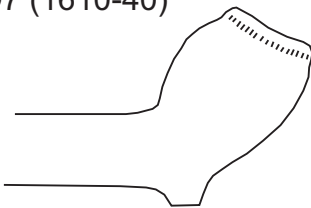
AO5 (1610-40)



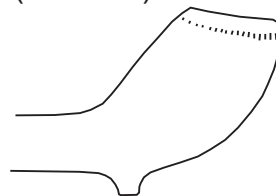
AO6 (1610-40)



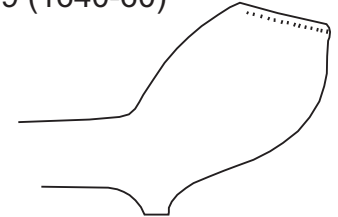
AO7 (1610-40)



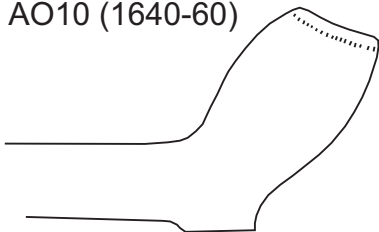
AO8 (1610-40)



AO9 (1640-60)



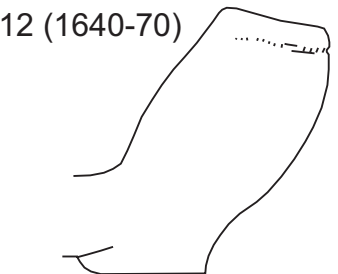
AO10 (1640-60)



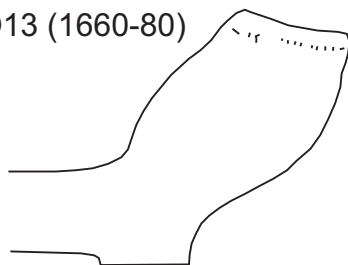
AO11 (1640-70)



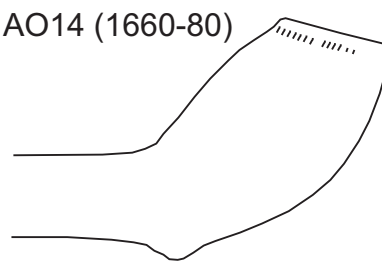
AO12 (1640-70)



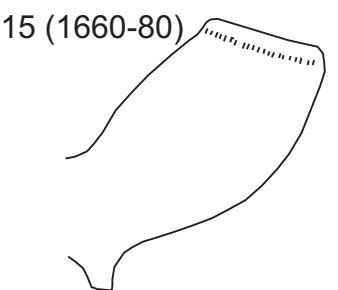
AO13 (1660-80)



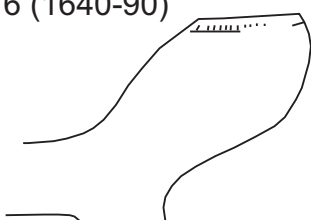
AO14 (1660-80)



AO15 (1660-80)



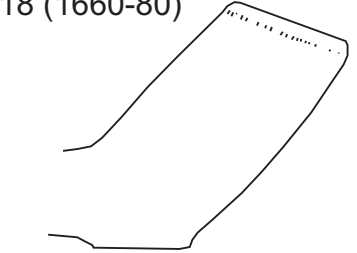
AO16 (1640-90)



AO17 (1680-1710)

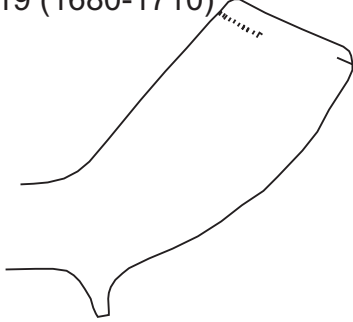


OA18 (1660-80)

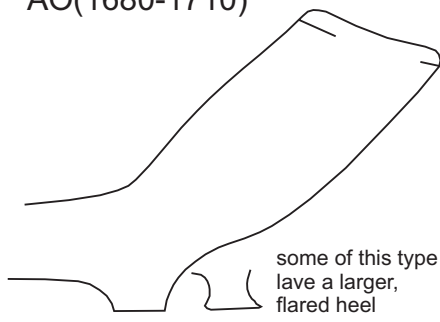


London Clay Tobacco Pipes (after Atkinson and Oswald 1969)

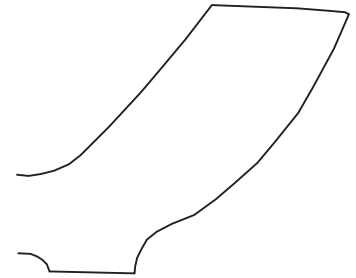
AO19 (1680-1710)



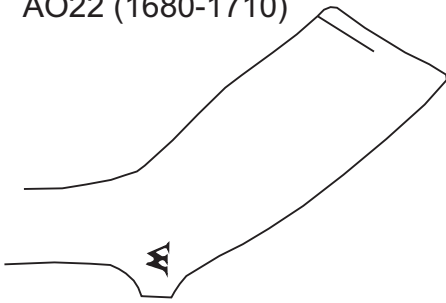
AO(1680-1710)



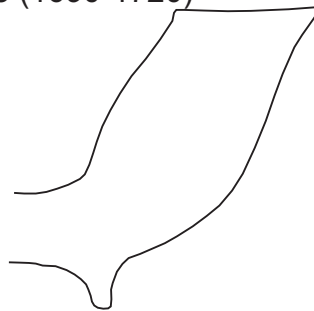
AO21 (1680-1710)



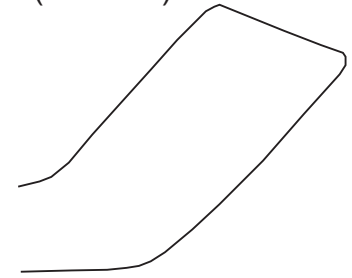
AO22 (1680-1710)



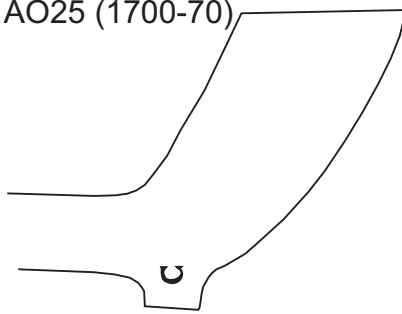
AO23 (1690-1720)



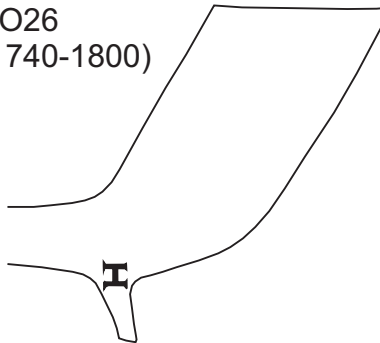
AO24 (1700-40)



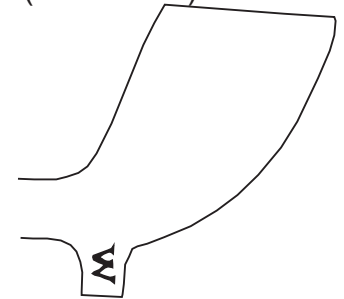
AO25 (1700-70)



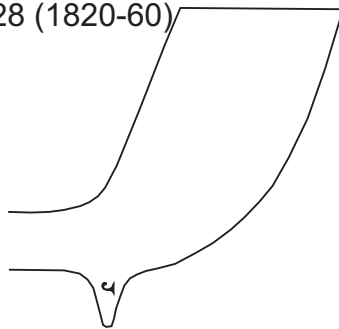
AO26  
(1740-1800)



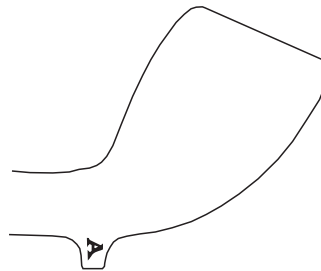
AO27 (1770-1845)



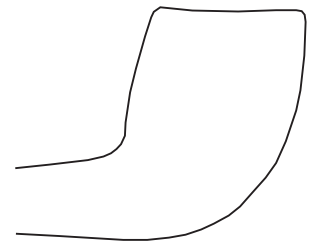
AO28 (1820-60)



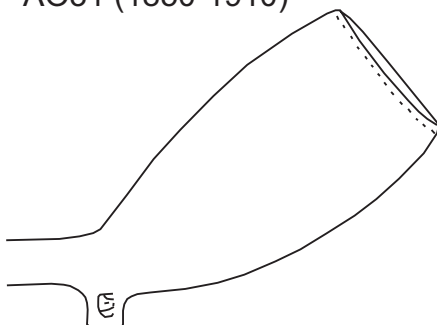
AO29 (1840-80)



AO30 (1850-1910)



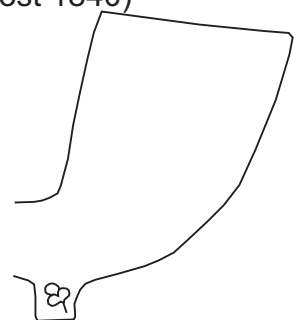
AO31 (1850-1910)



AO32 (1840-1910)



AO33 (Post 1840)



Pipes were produced in London from c.1580 and the London Company of Tobacco Pipe Makers was chartered in 1619. There are documentary records for many pipe makers and these can be linked to marked pipes and to production sites. Regional variations existed with major production centres in London and Bristol and Broseley (Shropshire) as well as local production sites. Pipes imported from the continent, especially Holland, and pipes made for the export market are also found, and many English pipes can be found in the former colonies. Other artefacts made from 'pipe clay' include hair curlers (for curling wigs) and figurines.

### Collection strategy

Clay Tobacco Pipe can be excellent dating evidence, sometimes with twenty or thirty year date ranges and even the stems can be roughly dated. Complete pipes are both extremely rare and fragile and should be protected from breakage, pipes can often be reconstructed as long as all stem fragments are collected.

100% of bowls, stems and mouthpieces should be collected wherever possible, especially from discrete or sealed deposits. When large quantities of CTP are found all pieces should be retained as this will allow a better understanding of the assemblage. Stamps and mouldings may not be visible under certain light or until cleaned and on-site selection will dramatically reduce the potential of the assemblage.

Kiln sites may be identified by the structural remains but also by pipe wasters, large quantities of broken pipes, and by fragments of 'muffle' - a second, inner, kiln wall which protected the pipes from discolouration by the kiln gases. Muffle was made from rough pipe-clay reinforced with broken pipe stems and bowl.

Stamped and moulded examples are generally accessioned. All fragments are entered into a database and details of their form, finish, and any decoration are recorded.

### Further reading

#### Web resources:

Society for Clay Pipe Research website: <http://scpr.co/index>

Museum of London digital database of Clay Tobacco Pipe maker's marks from London:  
<http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/claypipes/>

#### Published articles and books:

Atkinson, D R and Oswald, A, 1969 *London clay tobacco pipes*, J British Archaeol Assoc 32, 171-227

Ayto, E G 1994 *Clay Tobacco Pipes*, Shire Publications Ltd

Oswald, A, 1960 *English Clay Tobacco Pipes*, Museum of London

Oswald, A, 1975 *Clay pipes for the archaeologist*, BAR 14, Oxford

There is also the extensive series of BAR reports *The Archaeology of the Clay Tobacco Pipe including:*  
VI Davey, P, ed., 1981 *Pipes and Kilns in the London Region* BAR 97

IX Davey, P, ed., 1985 *More Pipes from the Midlands and Southern England* BAR 146

XIII Tatman, C and Davey, P, ed., 1994 *The Clay Tobacco Pipe Industry in the Parish of Newington, Southwark, London* BAR 239