

THE POT SELLERS OF GRIFFYDAM AND COLEORTON MOOR



BY SAMUEL T STEWART - SEPTEMBER 2024

PREFACE

This publication has been written to inform readers about the sellers of pottery wares in the local area in times gone by. It is not intended to be of a technical nature but to provide a platform for anyone wishing to research this interesting subject further.

FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH

An explanation is provided later in the publication

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To the MERCHANTS, TRADERS, and DEALERS
in EARTHEN WARE.
To be Sold, without Reserve,
(And considerably under the usual Wholesale Price)
At the DERBY POT-MANUFACTORY,
A Large Quantity of EARTHEN WARE,
being the whole Stock in Trade of that Great and
Extensive Factory, commonly known by the Name of
DERBY POT WORKS.
Consisting of an Assortment of Enamell'd and Blue-and-
White Useful CHINA; a large Quantity of Enamell'd
Cream Ware, and plain Cream tentable Ware; a great
Quantity of White Stone and Brown Ware.
N. B. The aforesaid Earthen Ware, &c. will be open'd
for Sale on the 4th and 6th of April, and continue selling
every Tuesday and Thursday until the whole is dispos'd off;
on which Days, (but no others in the Week) a proper Per-
son will attend the Sale.
This Earthen Ware will be Sold in different Lots, and is
well worth the Notice of the Pot Carriers, in and about
the Neighbourhood of Coleorton Moor.
No less a Quantity than two Horse Loads will be sold to
one Person.

The above advertisement appeared in numerous newspapers in March 1780, and makes a reference to "Pot Carriers" in and about the neighbourhood of Coleorton Moor. Although we will refer to "Pot Carriers" in the following text, they were also known as "Pot Sellers" "and Pot Hawkers"

Research has established that "Derby Pot - Manufactory" was also known as "Cockpit Hill Pot Works". This company had a considerable history and John Heath was one of the original partners in the pottery. In 1767 he purchased the shares of William Butts from the latter's widow and son, and in 1770 he became sole proprietor by purchasing the share of Thomas Rivett from his widow. Heath remained proprietor until bankruptcy befell him in 1779, following which the pottery came to an end. Heath's connection with the works had lasted nearly 28 years, reckoning from the date of partnership on 11th November 1751. **Clearly the above sale followed the closure of the manufactory.**

Ticknall Potters, of which there were several, were more well known for supplying their wares to surrounding pot carriers, but both the Derby and Ticknall potters could well have been the major suppliers *at that time*. It is interesting to note that the above advert states that "no less a quantity than two Horse Loads will be sold to one person". Fortunately, the turnpikes had become established at this time which would have made transportation more possible by horse and cart, although the advertisement infers pack horses as the mode of transport.

Bearing in mind that Ticknall pots were being made and sold even as early as the end of the fifteenth century, then presumably at this time, the potters sold the pots themselves by travelling to fairs and markets etc, by pack horses on what would have been deeply rutted tracks during the summer only. These tracks would have been deep in mud in winter time, and totally impassable one would imagine. As trade grew, the selling of pots made by the potters was taken on by specialist pot sellers.

Pot Carriers became well established in Griffydam and Coleorton, and in the latter part of the 18th century benefited from the villages being in the middle of an established network of turnpikes, meaning that they would have been able to transport these fragile and heavy wares by horse and cart instead of pack horses, to wider parts of the country. It seems the wares were sometimes packed in "Fatts" or casks to protect them during transport.

After Coleorton Pottery was opened opposite the Hamlet of Lount in 1835 (see the book entitled "Coleorton Pottery 1835-1938" by Samuel T Stewart) which coincided with the demise of the Ticknall potteries, Pot Carriers were already obtaining pottery from there to sell. The potteries in South Derbyshire (Woodville, Swadlincote, Hartshorne, Measham etc) had become established from the 1790s which was another source of pots for the carriers. **In fact, we have proof from our research into the property now known as 31, Top road, Griffydam, that in 1823 John Bailey (Pot Seller) of Griffydam owed a large sum of money to pottery manufacturers in Stafford.**

There is a great deal of evidence to show that a proliferation of pot carriers were still living in the area including Griffydam, up to the late 1800s, but particularly in Coleorton where there were 49 recorded. Surprisingly, even as late as the 1851 census, there are 8 Earthenware Pot Sellers / Dealers / Hawkers recorded in Griffydam.

So, we can conclude from research evidence that these local Pot Carriers initially obtained their pots from the several potters in Ticknall from the late 1500s and would have transported their wares around the country to fairs and markets etc in the early days by pack-horse.

The earliest known specialist pot seller in the Griffydam / Coleorton area was Edward Warden of Griffydam, a carpenter by trade. When his will was made in 1614 he listed a large number of debtors, many of whom could be identified from Ticknall. The references imply that Warden had paid in advance for the ware from the potters and that it was packed into "fatts" or casks for transport. The Warden family continued to be involved in selling pots after Edward's death, and his son John, also of Griffydam, witnessed the will of the Ticknall pot maker Richard Gardener of Scaddows in 1614 and the inventory showed that John Warden owed him a debt of 26s. 8d. (from "Ticknall Pots & Potters" by Janet Spavold & Sue Brown).

In the poll-book of 1775, two freeholders of Worthington, James Radford, and Francis Swan (**pot-carrier**), are entered as being resident at Griffy Dam.

Two potters (thought to be pot sellers actually) are recorded as John Mosendew of Overton Saucey, one of the two Coleorton manors, whose will was proved in 1629 and John Price who was baptised at Coleorton in 1640 (Janet Spavold and Sue Brown)

Many examples of broken pottery has been unearthed in the vicinity of Elder Lane, Griffydam, This is almost certainly shards of broken pottery left from where a pot carrier, seller or hawker lived, possibly even dating from the days of the Warden family or Francis Swan. When the Coleorton bypass was being constructed, a large quantity of broken pottery was found not far from Coleorton Hall. Unfortunately this was not photographed, but could well have originated from a pot seller living there.

In the fields, known as Dye House Close at Griffydam, below Elder Lane, a lot of pottery was dug up from the lower part of the valley through which the brook runs. The best examples found were given to Peter Liddle (Leicestershire Archaeologist & Historian) who said it was the best Cistercian Ware made in Ticknall, he had seen in the county – this is further confirmation that the pot sellers were obtaining their wares from Ticknall at this time.

The most common pottery shards found on the site were rims of Pancheons which are large shallow earthenware bowls or vessels wider at the top than at the bottom, and were used especially to put milk in to let the cream separate. These were probably manufactured later at Coleorton Pottery opposite the hamlet of Lount. It is thought that this pottery was likely to have been dumped there at some time



Examples of shards of pottery found in Dye House Close, Griffydam, some of which originate from Ticknall



The above photographs showing various shards of pottery found adjacent to the site of a property in Elder Lane.

It is possible that the blue and white shards are China wares made at the Derby Pot - Manufactory (Cockpit Hill Pot Works).

This is further evidence of Pottery Carriers / Sellers / Hawkers living in the area.

A GRIFFYDAM POT CARRIER NAMED HIBBERT IN 1832

The following is transcribed from the Leicester Chronicle – June 16th 1832

DARING ROBBERY. – About nine o'clock on Saturday, as a female named Hibbert, of Griffydam, in this county, who travels about with earthenware, was coming along the Melton road to Loughborough, she was stopped by three men within two miles and a half of the latter place, who robbed her of 18 sovereigns', 4s 6d. in silver, and three pair of shoes, two of which were women's, and the other a child's about three years of age. One of the ruffians having knocked her down and kicked her while on the ground, the others proceeded to take the money &c., from her, saying with oaths, if she attempted to create any alarm, that they would murder her. They were dressed as sailors, two of them wearing white trousers, and the other blue ; one of them wore a glazed hat – the other a striped worsted cap, and the third had a red cotton handkerchief tied about his head. When they had plundered Mrs. Hibbert, they ran off in the direction of Melton.

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**SUPPLEMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHS RELATED TO
THE COCKPIT HILL POTWORKS**



PLATE 4.—The "New House" on the site of the Cockpit Hill Potworks as it appeared in 1930.
Photo. by H. A. Wallace, Esq. *To face p. 58.*



A china teapot made at Derby Pot - Manufactory / Cockpit Hill Potworks



Thomas Burton's Cream ware Jug

From the Cockpit Hill Pot Works made in the year prior to its closure