

## 1570 Culzean Caves Artefact Assemblage

By Kylie Seretis

### Introduction

The artefact assemblage examined consists of 126 finds from 12 contexts. There are ten artefact classes – glass, shell, tile, stone, pottery, clay, brick, metal, bone and stalagmite. The shell, bone, stalagmite and natural stone will not be discussed here.

### Method

The assemblage was sorted, quantified (by count) and described by ware type, finish, decoration and where possible by vessel type. This information forms the core of the catalogue, which is supplemented by descriptions of individual pieces, and photographs.

The glass table is designed to encompass all types of glass including vessels such as tablewares and bottles as well as non-vessel glass such as window glass.

The methods used to catalogue and analyse the pottery assemblages are based on the Medieval Pottery Research Group *Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Post-Roman Ceramics* (Slowikowski et al 2001).

The analysis involves relating the assemblages to their stratigraphic and spatial context across the site.

### Description by Context

#### *Culzean Caves Excavation 2002*

*Context:* 196

*Number of Finds:* 5

*Date Range:* 18<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> century

*Comment:* There are four pieces of glass consisting of one base (ID 85) and three necks (ID 81, 82, 84) all the glass is an smoky olive green and comes from wine style bottles. There is one piece of Buckley ware discussed above (ID 83). The majority of the deposit dates to the mid to late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

#### *CUCV 03*

*Context:* Cliff face below castle

*Number of Finds:* 1

*Date Range:* 20<sup>th</sup> century

*Comment:* One piece of flat etched glass, 20<sup>th</sup> century in date was recovered from the cliff face.

*Context:* Surface Finds

*Number of Finds:* 10

*Date Range:* 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century

*Comment:* There are four pieces of pottery and two glass bases. Two wheel made pieces dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, one black glazed redware (ID 78) and another piece of Buckley ware (ID 80). The two pieces of early to mid 19<sup>th</sup> ceramic join (ID 77, 79). The glass consists of two green 19<sup>th</sup> century wine style bases (ID 46, 47). There is one piece of bone (ID 48 - not discussed). The majority of the deposit dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century.

*Context:* Doorstep 001

*Number of Finds:* 2

*Date Range:* 19<sup>th</sup> century

*Comment:* This deposit consists of two pieces of weather/water worn pieces of earthenware (ID 20, 21). These date to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

*Context:* Doorway Tr 001

*Number of Finds:* 7

*Date Range:* late 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century

*Comment:* This is a rather mixed deposit consisting of one shell (ID 34), a pebble (ID 33), two pieces of brick (ID 30, 31), a fragment of slate (ID 32) and two pieces of green glass (ID 28, 29). The majority of the deposit dates to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, one piece of glass (ID 29) could date from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

*Context:* Doorway Tr 002

*Number of Finds:* 2

*Date Range:* late 18<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> century

*Comment:* There are only two finds from this deposit; one piece of glass, an olive green base from a wine style bottle, late 18<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> century in date and one bone, possibly rat (ID 72).

*Context:* Tr 1 001

*Number of Finds:* 43

*Date Range:* late 15<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century

*Comment:* This is a very mixed deposit consisting of pottery, glass, metal, and bone, ranging in date from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup> century (the bone - ID 64 – will not be discussed here). The nail (ID 63) is short and heavily corroded, it looks machine made and probably dates from the early to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. There is one fragment of clay pipe (ID 22) dating to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The pottery consists of three pieces of green glaze (ID 73) dating to the late 15, early 16<sup>th</sup> century; two pieces of stone ware (ID 19, 74) dating to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century; and one piece of earthen ware with a green leaf design (ID 75) dated from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century. The glass consists of two green body sherds (ID 49, 61), one clear body sherd (ID 52), one green bottle neck (ID 50), one clear bottle neck and rim (ID 55), 19 brown body sherds (ID 51, 53) all dating to the 20<sup>th</sup> century; three clear body sherds (ID 56, 57, 59) and one olive green body sherd (ID 60) of an unknown date.

*Context:* Tr 1 002

*Number of Finds:* 14

*Date Range:* 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century

*Comment:* This deposit consists of tile, glass and a pebble (ID 14) - the latter will not be discussed here. The tile fragment (ID 13) has a black glaze on one side and may date

between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. The glass assemblage consists of one olive green body sherd (ID 10) dating to the 19<sup>th</sup> century; five clear body sherds (ID 11, 12), two brown body sherd (ID 8, 9), two green body sherd (ID 5, 6) and one base (ID 7) all dating to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

*Context:* Tr 1 003

*Number of Finds:* 4

*Date Range:* 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century

*Comment:* This deposit consists of four pieces of thin flat window glass, with heavy patina, dating to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

*Context:* Tr 2 200

*Number of Finds:* 15

*Date Range:* 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century

*Comment:* This deposit consists of glass, metal, shell and stalagmite (the latter two will not be discussed here). The metal fragments (ID 70) are heavily corroded and unidentifiable, one circular fragment is suggestive of some form of metal canister probably 19<sup>th</sup> century. The glass assemblage consists of olive green neck and lip (ID 65) dating to the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century; two olive green body sherds (ID 1, 2) and one green black case bottle base (ID 3) dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> / 19<sup>th</sup> century; one light green body sherd (ID 67), one clear body sherd (ID 68) and one clear base (ID 66) dating to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

*Context:* Tr 3 302

*Number of Finds:* 5

*Date Range:* 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century

*Comment:* This deposit consists entirely of glass; two olive green wine style base fragments dating to the 18 – 19<sup>th</sup> century (ID 23, 24); one 19<sup>th</sup> century olive green body sherd; one clear bottle neck and lip dating to the 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century; and one body sherd of blue glass probably dating to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

*Context:* Tr 4 400

*Number of Finds:* 18

*Date Range:* early 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century

*Comment:* This deposit contains three pieces of delft pottery, two base fragments (ID 15, 16) and one body sherd (ID 17) dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The remainder of the assemblage is a variety of glassware; two olive green wine style bottle necks with lips (ID 36, 37) dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> century; one olive green base fragment (ID 40) and one olive green shoulder fragment (ID 39) dating from the late 18<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> century; one light olive green wine style body sherd (ID 38) dating to the 19<sup>th</sup> century; and three green body sherds (ID 41, 43, 44), one clear body sherd (ID 42) dating to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## **Discussion by Assemblage Type**

### *The Glass Assemblage*

The glass ware found in Culzean Caves ranges in date from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the modern period. The glass assemblage is mainly represented by wine style bottles, in the form of rims, necks and bases. On this note several glass bottle necks and bases were recovered but,

unusually, very little body sherds. The term wine style is used so as to include bottles similar to wine bottles that may have contained other liquids or have been reused (i.e. demijohns).

#### *The Pottery Assemblage*

The pottery found in Culzean Caves dates from the late 15<sup>th</sup>/early 16<sup>th</sup> century up to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The pottery assemblage consisting of 19 sherds, whilst small in comparison to the glass, has some interesting pieces. There are three pieces of post-medieval green glaze pottery (ID 73), the sherds are quite thin (5mm) and probably came from at least two vessels. There are three pieces of delftware (ID 15, 16 & 17) and is probably 18<sup>th</sup> century in date. The origin of the pottery is not discernable but delftware is produced in numerous places across the UK, including Glasgow. Two pieces in particular stand out as interesting (ID 80 & 83). These appear to be locally made coarse earthenware dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> century and were probably used for storage or as cooking pots. The fabric is coarse and made up of a combination of two different types of clay in the process (the characteristic red and yellow layers). It has been suggested that the combination of the two clays served to make poor clays more workable (Noel Hume 1991:133). The ware is decorated with a black lead-glaze (internal and externally). The unglazed portion of the exterior fabric is a reddish-purple colour. The body interior is heavily ribbed. The size and weight of the vessel would suggest they were used as a storage jars. Interestingly this ware is found in 18<sup>th</sup> century contexts as far a field as the United States. Noel Hume (1991:132-133) and South (1977: 211) call this ware Buckley ware and state its origins as North Wales, the Buckley district, exported to the United States through Liverpool. I would not rule out the possibility that this vessel is a locally produced ware. Ayrshire has significant clay deposits and is home to several potteries and fireclay works in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Seretis 2003, Seretis 2004).

#### *The Structural Material*

Three classes of structural artefacts were found in the assemblage – flat glass, a nail, bricks and roofing slate. These were not found in any great number; one nail (Tr 001 – ID 63), one piece of roofing slate (Doorway Tr 001- ID 32), two pieces of window glass (Cliff face below castle –ID 45 and Tr 1 003 – ID 76) and two bricks (Doorway Tr 001 – ID 30 & 31).

## **Conclusions**

The assemblage as whole presents an interesting range of material. In comparing the deposits within the cave to those found near the entrances would suggest that the cave has not been regularly cleaned out or swept. There is no greater build up of deposits by the entrance as anywhere else. Some top deposits have a long date range, for example Trench 1 001 dates from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Other such as context 196 (from the 2002 excavations) are quite tight in date (18<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> century).

It was possible to join some of the assemblage pieces within contexts but not across contexts. This (and the clear clean breaks) would suggest that the breakage's that have occurred as part of the excavation process. Further excavation of the cave may through light on what has happened to the other elements of vessels.

Since the deposits are from a cave rather than a house or domestic site the period mix across some deposits is perhaps not surprising. The cave was probably used intermittently for

different purposes over several hundred years. The assemblage does not give us a clear indication of activities across all periods.

The best representation would be the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and the assemblage tentatively suggests that the cave may have been used for storage (the Buckley ware) of goods and the storage of liquids possibly alcohol (the bottle necks and bases). The use of the cave and water access here rather than one of the nearby easily accessed ports could suggest illicit trade or avoidance of taxes.

## References

Brauner, D.R. (compiler) 2000 *Approaches to the Material Culture Research for Historical Archaeologists*. Society for Historical Archaeology, Tucson.

Hedges, AAC 1975 *Bottles and Bottle Collecting*. Shire Publications Ltd, Aylesbury, Bucks. Shire Album 6.

Jones, O. 2000 'Glass Bottle Push-ups and Pontil Marks', in D. R. Brauner (compiler) *Approaches to the Material Culture Research for Historical Archaeologists*. Society for Historical Archaeology, Tucson. P. 149-160

Miller, G. L. and C. Sullivan 2000 'Machine-Made Glass Containers and the End of Production for Mouth Blown Bottles', in D. R. Brauner (compiler) *Approaches to the Material Culture Research for Historical Archaeologists*. Society for Historical Archaeology, Tucson. P. 161-174.

Noël Hume, I 1991 *A Guide to Artifacts of Colonial America*. Vintage Books, New York. (First published 1969).

Slowikowski, A., Nenck, B and J. Pearce 2001 *Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Post-Roman Ceramics*. Medieval Pottery Research Group. Occasional Paper No. 2.

Sydney Cove Authority Data base 1994 *The Rocks Database*. (SCA DB).

South, Stanley. 1977. *Method and Theory in Historical Archaeology*. Academic Press, New York.

White, J.R. 2000 'Bottle Nomenclature: A Glossary of Landmark Terminology for the Archaeologist', in D. R. Brauner (compiler) *Approaches to the Material Culture Research for Historical Archaeologists*. Society for Historical Archaeology, Tucson. P. 139-148.

## Web Addresses

<http://www.stmarys.ca/academic/arts/anthropology/sdavis/ceramics/buckley.html>