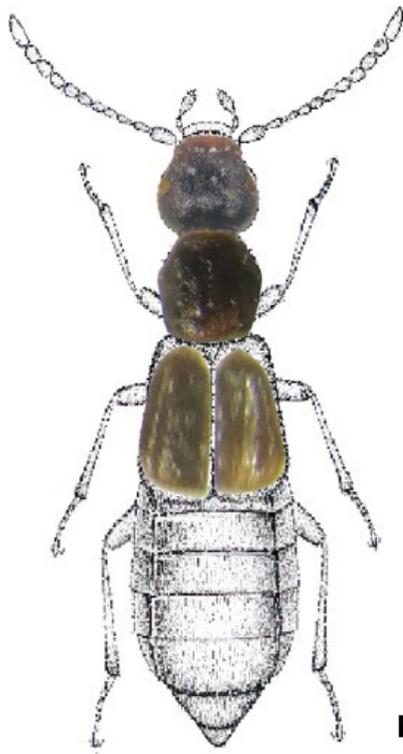


# Provincial Archaeology Office Annual Review



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# Archaeology at Ferryland 2022

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Figure 1: Collapsed back wall of the Mansion House (Structure 16) fireplace, looking south, after displaced wall rocks were removed.

The 2022 field season at Ferryland began with the repair of several extant stone wall features that partially collapsed over the previous winter. Even though many of the 17th-century remnants of the Ferryland colony are quite stable, and we protect at-risk features such as fireplaces with tarps each fall, some damage is to be expected over time due to freeze-thaw, intense storms, and other factors. The most notable feature that required attention was the large fireplace associated with the colony's principal dwelling or 'Mansion House' built in the 1620s and occupied by George Calvert, David Kirke, Sara Kirke, and other members of the Kirke family until 1696. Repairs to the back wall of the Mansion House (designated Structure 16) fireplace necessitated that we first remove dozens of large wall rocks that had pushed forward and collapsed onto the hearth floor due to pressure from infill directly behind the fireplace — fill which had been dumped there during the final construction phase of the Mansion House when a massive builder's trench was capped off with upwards of two metres of clay, gravel and rock. To facilitate the restoration of the fireplace to the condition in which it was first uncovered/recorded, we also excavated a 0.5m

by 4m trench behind this feature (Figures 1-2). The excavation trench allowed us to expose the lowest courses of intact wall upon which to rebuild, and to remove the adjacent clay and rock infill to alleviate future pressure upon the newly rebuilt fireplace. Unsurprisingly, the infill deposit contained scattered bits of building material such as brick, slate roofing tile and chunks of limestone, along with occasional ceramic and glass fragments (for additional

Figure 2: Excavation trench behind Structure 16 fireplace, in progress.





Figure 3: 1m by 4m excavation to the northeast of Feature 217, Area D, looking southwest.

Figure 4: (left) ca. 1620s-40s clay tobacco pipe bowl fragment;  
(right) monogrammed IS maker's mark on heel of same pipe.





**Figure 5: Excavation of builder’s trench on the exterior east wall of Feature 2017, Area D, looking south.**

detailed interpretation of the construction of Ferryland’s principal 17th-century dwelling.

Planned excavation in 2022 focused on the remaining midden deposits and builder’s trenches associated with a 1620s stone structure (Feature 217) located to 30m east of the original village and previously interpreted as an industrial or special purpose building (Gaulton and Bethune 2020; Gaulton 2021). The first operation targeted a 1m by 4m area northeast of the structure’s door where previous excavation identified the location of the primary midden (Figure 3). Here, we continued to find a substantial number of artifacts dating from the 1620s-1640s including British coarse earthenware, German stoneware, case bottle glass, a crucible fragment or two, and several datable pipe bowls (Figure 4a-b). The newly excavated material did not alter our interpretation of this structure but rather, strengthened our previous theory on its range of occupation.

information on previous builder’s trench excavations see Gaulton 2015; Gaulton and Hawkins 2015, 2016, 2017). Excavations also revealed the remnants of an upright wooden post, roughly 12.5cm in diameter, set at the bottom of the builder’s trench which we interpret as part of a wooden scaffolding. Given the two-story height of the stone Mansion House, it is believed that some form of scaffolding would have been required to complete the upper level and to roof the dwelling in slate tiles; yet this is the first tangible evidence that such a temporary wooden structure existed. The repair and rebuilding activities associated with the fireplace, in this instance, brought a more

interpretation of this structure but rather, strengthened our previous theory on its range of occupation.

Work on the associated builder’s trench deposits, along the eastern and southern edges of the structure, resulted in a similar outcome (Figure 5). Construction debris in the form of roof tile fragments and bits of shale/slate trimmed from wall rocks was expected and recorded; however, a dearth of other artifacts such as ceramics, glass and clay tobacco pipes suggest that the 23 by 23-foot stone-walled structure was built and roofed over within a short period. Whether this was a matter of weeks or months is uncertain (for a discussion on tradesmen

Figure 6: Early 17<sup>th</sup>-century pipe bowl found at the top of builder's trench on the south side of Feature 217.



Figure 7: 1m by 3m excavation in Area F, looking west.



Figure 8: 17<sup>th</sup>-century artifacts in lowest midden deposit. Top left: lead bale seal; top right: partial glass bottle seal; bottom left: iron door latch and lock fragment; bottom right: small fishhook.

working on this building see Spiwak 2020). An early 17th century pipe bowl fragment (Figure 6) found at the very top of the builder’s trench on the south side of the building confirms this structure was erected during the Calvert era, likely sometime between 1623 — the year after the colony’s governor Edward Wynne requested that masons, slaters, and other tradesmen be sent to Ferryland — and 1629, the year of the Calvert family’s departure. Now that the structural remains of this building are fully uncovered and its associated deposits recorded, the artifact assem-

blage will be analyzed, interpreted, and incorporated into the corpus of knowledge on the operations of this early 17th-century English colony and the daily lives of its residents. More to follow in the coming years.

While the midden deposit and builder’s trench were being investigated, a 1m by 3m excavation was also taking place at the west end of the site across from the old Colony Café (Figure 7). This is the same location where, in previous years, the field crew had uncovered additional segments of the 17th-century



**Figure 9: Southern edge of 1620s cobblestone street and adjacent boulder, Area F, looking west.**

cobblestone street (Gaulton and Hawkins 2015; Gaulton and Bethune 2020). In advance of construction of new pressure treated fencing along this part of the site, Neil Jordan led the excavation through a series of overlying deposits dating from the 20th century to the second half of the 17th century. The lowest cultural deposits from the 18th and 17th centuries were particularly rich. The former contained 18th-

century wine bottle fragments, marked clay tobacco pipes from Barnstaple, German stoneware mug fragments from the Westerwald region, an iron padlock and a heavily worn copper and silver button with a floral motif. The latter and deeper 17th-century deposits contained notable objects such as a lead bale seal, a partial glass bottle seal, parts of an iron door lock, a door latch, and a very small (freshwater?) fishhook (Figure 8). The south edge of the 17th-century cobblestone street lay directly below this midden deposit.

There was nothing particularly notable about the additional 3m section of cobblestone pavement beyond what has been reported in previous years. The installation of water and septic lines in the 20th century continue to be the primary cause of disturbance in this area, and in several places the cobblestones have been dug up. What is of particular interest however is the massive boulder situated immediately south of the edge of the street (Figure 9). Excavation revealed that the cobblestone street was set directly against the boulder. Basically, the boulder was in situ when settlers were planning the overall direction and orientation of the street and therefore, given its size, likely impacted the eventual placement and positioning of Newfoundland and Labrador's first paved street here at Ferryland. Previous assumptions regarding the unusual curvature and positioning of the cobblestone street at Ferryland centered on the town's layout in relation to the Mansion House as its central hub (Bethune 2022). This new discovery, while not overturning earlier theories, could suggest that more mundane factors (such as this and other boulders) played an important part in the street's final positioning.

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