

# THE CLAY INDUSTRY AND POTTERIES

*"Time's wheel runs back or stops: potter and clay endure".*

(Robert Browning)

**A**long with all the other industry that our village on the banks of the tidal Torridge developed, was the clay industry.

## CLAY

As today, for centuries man has recognised the quality of the clay found in the southwest, primarily washed down from the granite of Dartmoor and Bodmin moors.

Weare Giffard's niche in the story of clay goes back many centuries. For example, Alison Grant in her book "North Devon Pottery" writes:

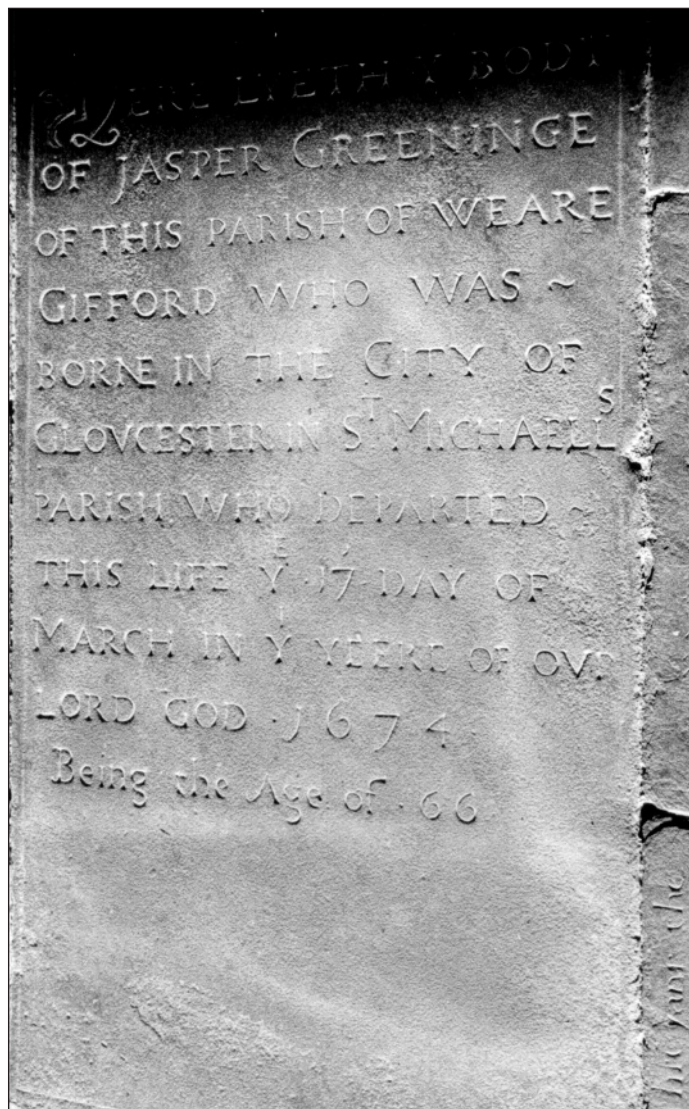
*"In 1654/55 Jasper Greening - who lived in Bideford was a ship's master originally carrying tobacco pipe clay to Gloucester. He became interested in the clay works at Peters Marland and the family had the monopoly of this clay moor".*

Transport of this clay would have been through Weare Giffard; and then put on barges, which sailed on to Bideford then to Bristol and Gloucester.

Packhorse or cart would have been used to transport clay from Peters Marland to Weare

Giffard. There probably was a quay and stables for horses here, although the return journey from Peters Marland to Weare Giffard could be made in a day.

In 1660 Jasper Greening came to live in the village and died in 1674 - his gravestone is just inside the church, adjacent to the font.



## THE POTTERY

In part of the field called Brick or Little March, there was a large Pottery which made some domestic pottery - but mainly produced drainage pipes. The North Devon Pottery Company which was set up around 1849, exhibited specimens of pipe, etc., in the Great Exhibition of 1851, and they were awarded a Medal, Certificate and Jurors Report. (NDJ 9/9/1854). Henry Jones was the Master at that time.

Earlier Potteries probably existed on the site, as finds include pieces of pot from much earlier periods. These range from delicate slipware dishes to coarse stoneware dairy utensils. Some of the kiln bricks can be seen in the hedge bank across the field.

Previous local residents can remember children playing around the old bottle ovens and pits in the 1950's, and one child nearly met with an early death when he fell part of the way into a well. The well was subsequently filled in. The last remains of the Pottery were demolished in the early 1970's.

(Ref: Patrick Tucker/Aubrey Gorvett).



*Remains of the Pottery*