

# Cylindrical Beakers

(a summary by Roman Glassmakers)  
(All drawings are at scale 1:2)

Cylindrical beakers are one of the most common forms of drinking vessels from the mid 16th to late 17th centuries, and are widely distributed throughout England. They have their parallels in 16th century silver and early 17th century pewter. The earlier beakers have a trail around the base, often decorated with a milled pattern ('rigaree' pattern), whilst the beakers from the mid 17th century onwards lack the base trail. Although many of these beakers were imported from the Continent, they were also made in England, so it is not always possible to decide where each beaker was made. As so many have been found in England, they are included here.

The main centres of production on the Continent are the Low Countries and Italy. Beakers from these areas are often in a colourless glass (as is often the case), whereas many of those made in England are in the cheaper blue green glass (a legacy of the forest glass industry and its lower quality, cheaper raw materials). Cylindrical beakers often appear on paintings of breakfast scenes from the Low Countries, possibly reflecting the taste for quantities of the weaker 'small beer' in the morning.

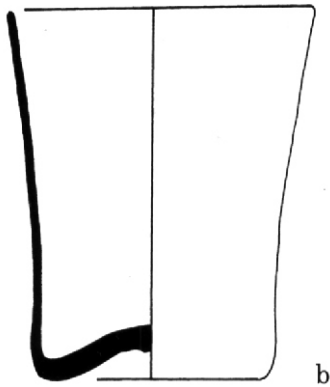
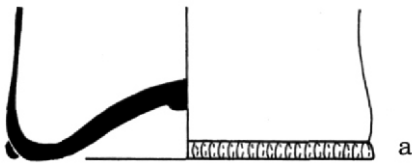


Figure 5 Plain cylindrical beakers

Plain cylindrical beaker:

The surface of the beaker is left undecorated, although the earlier examples have a trail as a base ring, often decorated with a rigaree pattern.

a: mid 16th to early 17th century.  
b: late 17th century.

English and Continental examples.

Willmott 2002, Figs. 5, 6 and 7

(from London (5a) and Oxford (5b), Canterbury (6) and Oxford (7))

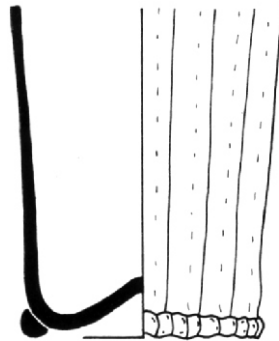


Figure 6 Cylindrical beaker with optic-blown vertical ribs

Cylindrical beaker with optic-blown vertical ribs:

The body is decorated with vertical ribs and has a rigaree trail.

Late 16th to early 17th century.

English and Continental examples.

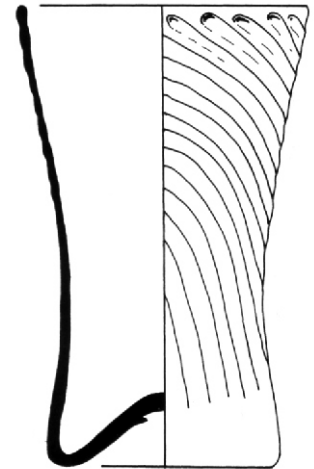


Figure 7 Cylindrical beaker with optic-blown wrythen ribs

Cylindrical beaker with optic-blown wrythen ribs:

The body is decorated with wrythen ribs, although on the lower part of the beaker the ribs will become less distinct due to stretching during manufacture.

Early to mid 17th century.

Mainly English examples.

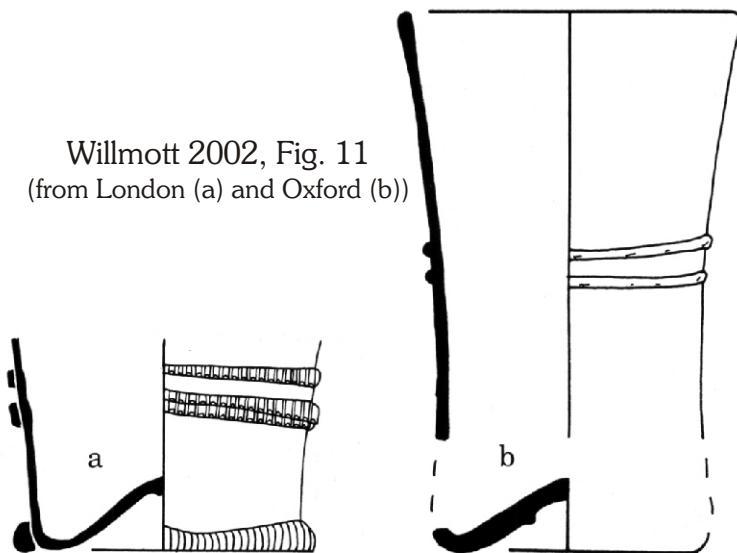
Cylindrical beaker with horizontal trails:

The body is decorated with horizontal trails, which may be thick or thin, rigaree-patterned, or left plain. The earlier examples have a trailed base-ring, which is often decorated with a rigaree pattern. An example of this beaker is depicted on the painting by Joseph de Bray (below).

a: mid 16th to early 17th century.

b: late 17th century.

English and Continental examples (from the Low Countries and Venice).



Willmott 2002, Fig. 11  
(from London (a) and Oxford (b))

Figure 11 Cylindrical beakers with horizontal trails

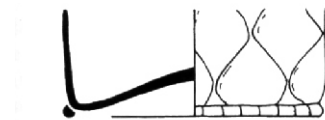


Figure 9 Cylindrical beaker  
with optic-blown mesh

Willmott 2002, Fig. 9  
(from Eccleshall Castle, Staffordshire)

Cylindrical beaker with optic-blown mesh:

The body is decorated with a mould-blown diamond pattern, and there is a rigaree trail for a foot-ring.

First half of the 17th century.

England and the Low Countries.



Joseph de Bray 1656  
In Praise of the Pickled Herring

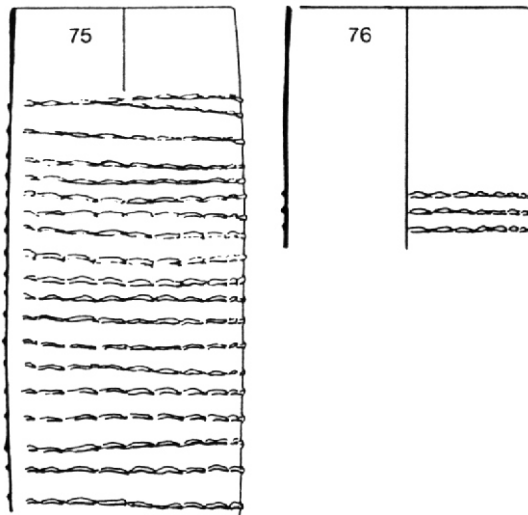


Cylindrical beaker with thin-cut trailing:

A fine trail has been wrapped around the partially inflated beaker, reheated and further inflated in an optic mould. This has the effect of dividing the trail into short sections which are more or less melted into the body. A rigaree foot-ring is applied, suggesting an early date for this type of beaker. As they are often found in greenish glass, as at Rosedale, this suggests their manufacture in English glasshouses. As such, it appears to be the English version of the beaker with thick-cut trailing which was produced in the Low Countries

Late 16th to early 17th century.

English and Continental examples.



Cylindrical beakers from Queen Street, Exeter (early 17th century):

G.75: Fragmentary cylindrical beaker. Clear greyish-colourless glass with chequered spiral trail decoration and iridescent weathering Facon de Venise. Netherlandish or English.

G.76: Fragments of a vessel of the same type and glass as G.75.

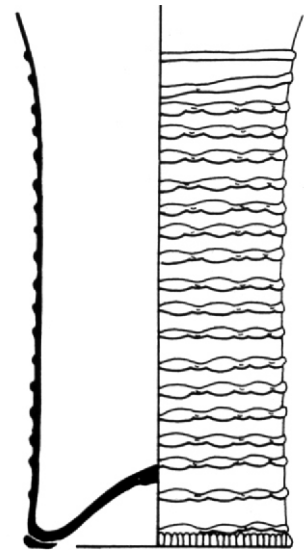


Figure 14 Cylindrical beaker with thin-cut trailing

Willmott 2002, Fig. 14 (from Eccleshall Castle, Staffordshire)

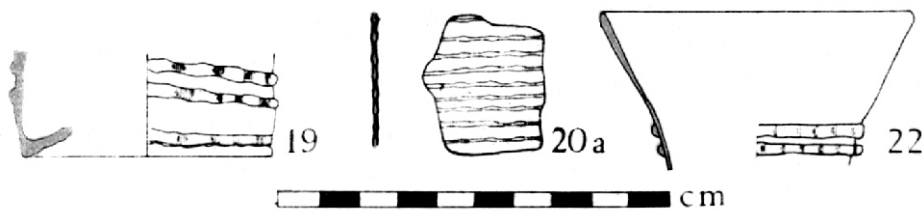


FIG. 60 HUTTON AND ROSEDALE Vessel glass from Rosedale. Scale: 1/2 cm

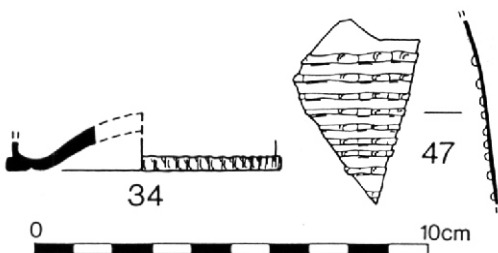


FIG. 9 - 10 Houghton Green: green vessel glass

Fragments of cylindrical beakers with thin-cut trailing from 16th and 17th century glassmaking sites in England

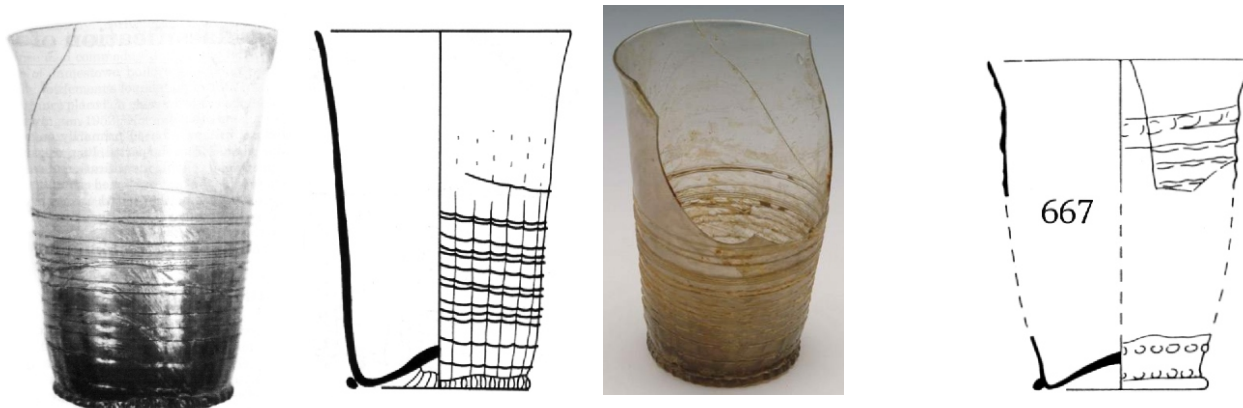
16th: Hutton and Rosedale, Yorkshire

17th: Houghton Green, near Manchester

Two cylindrical beakers:

Although, at first glance, these two beakers seem to have very different decoration, and Willmott assigns each one to a different class, the order in which the components are assembled and the processes carried out are the same (namely: trail, vertical optic-moulding, inflation and application of rigaree trail). The difference is in the thickness and amount of reheating of the trail (both greater in no.667).

No.667 is definitely a beaker with thin-cut trailing, whilst Willmott fig. 10 is closely related to it.



Willmott Pl. 6

Willmott Fig. 10

Plate 6 and Figure 10 (MoL 5148):

Seventeenth century colourless cylindrical beaker with optic-blown ribs and overlaid trail. English, from Sun Street, Moorfields, London.

Height: 93mm, Rim diameter: 67mm, Base diameter: 48mm

Mortimer Wheeler House (Ceramics and Glass store)

A high concentration of finds in London suggest that this beaker was made there.

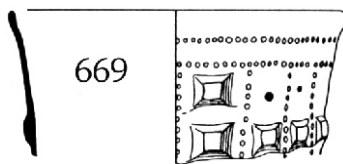
Cylindrical beaker from Norwich (17th century):

667: Base and part of rim of beaker, with applied base-ring, not rouletted; pale grey glass, slightly bubbled; decorated with chequered spiral trail. Probably an import from the Netherlands.

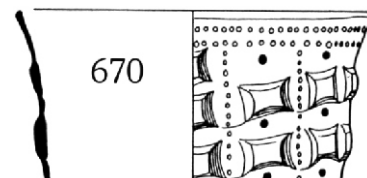
Cylindrical beaker with thick-cut trailing:

These beakers, always with a trail for a foot-ring (often a rigaree trail), and always occurring in colourless glass, are a common find in England, but are a product of the Low Countries and Germany. Their decoration is similar to that of thin-cut trailed beakers, but the trail is thicker and well integrated with the body. A variation of this beaker is decorated with enamelled dots, trails and zig-zags, and also comes from the Low Countries.

Late 16th to mid 17th century.



669



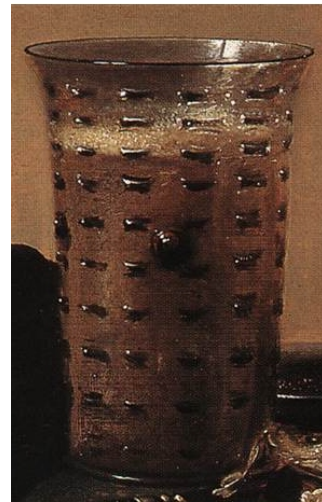
670

Cylindrical beakers from Norwich (mid 17th century):

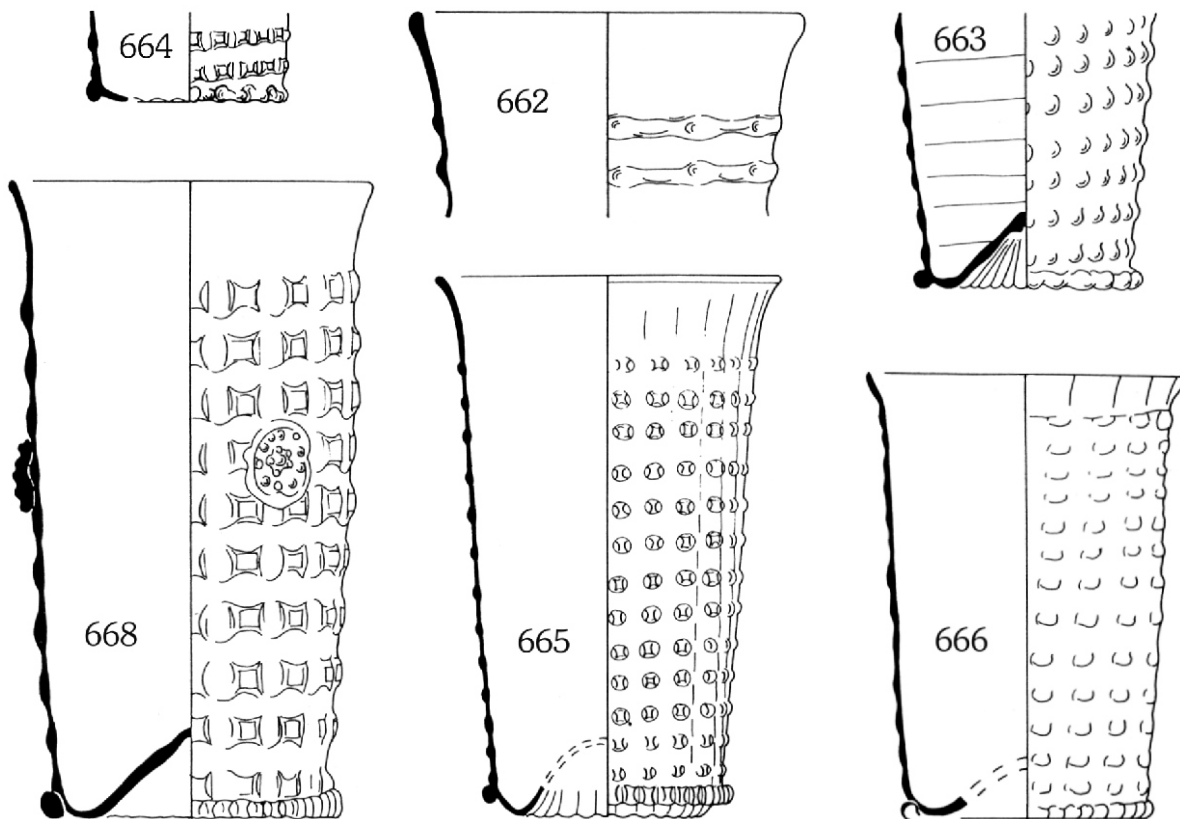
669: Rim fragments of beaker; pale smokey-grey glass; decorated with broad chequered spiral trail, with horizontal rows of white enamel dots around rim, vertical rows of same in concavities in the decoration, and dots of blue enamel between the vertical rows. From context dated c.1640.

670: Similar vessel to 669. From context dated to c.1640.

Late 16th century cylindrical beaker (photo courtesy of H. Willmott)



Pieter Claesz 1636: Herring with a Glass of Beer and a Roll



Cylindrical beakers from Norwich (From contexts dated to c.1600-1700):

664: Base of beaker, with applied foot-ring; pale yellowish-green glass; unweathered; decorated with a chequered spiral trail.

662: Part of rim; pale greenish-grey glass; with pale blue streak with small bubbles; decorated with broad chequered spiral trail.

663: Base of beaker, with applied foot-ring pinched at intervals; formerly colourless glass, now weathered to green sheen on surface; decorated with a chequered spiral trail. From context dated c.1600-1650.

668: Beaker, with applied rouletted foot-ring; clear smokey-grey glass; decorated with broad chequered spiral trail; vertical moulding continuing under base; side of vessel also decorated with applied prunts of same colour glass, stamped with simple rosette design.

665: Beaker, with applied rouletted base-ring of same colour glass; pale smokey-grey glass, little weathering; decorated with chequered spiral trail which carries on under base, and vertical ridges carrying up to rim.

666: Fragments of beaker, with applied rouletted base-ring; pale grey glass with slight greenish tinge; slightly bubbled; decorated with chequered spiral trail.

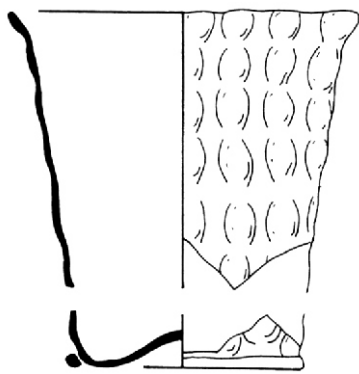
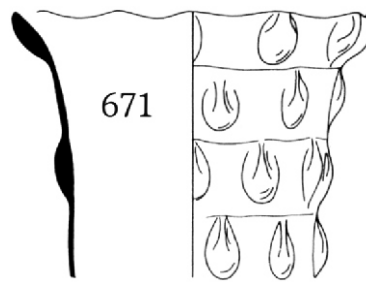


Figure 8 Cylindrical beaker  
with optic-blown bosses



Cylindrical beaker from Norwich (17th century):  
671: Fragments from upper part of beaker; pale yellowish-  
grey glass; decorated with mould-blown bosses.

Willmott 2002, Figs. 8, 12 and 15  
(from Canterbury (8), and London (12 and 15))

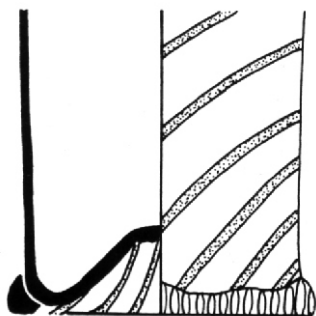


Figure 12 Cylindrical beaker  
with coloured trailing

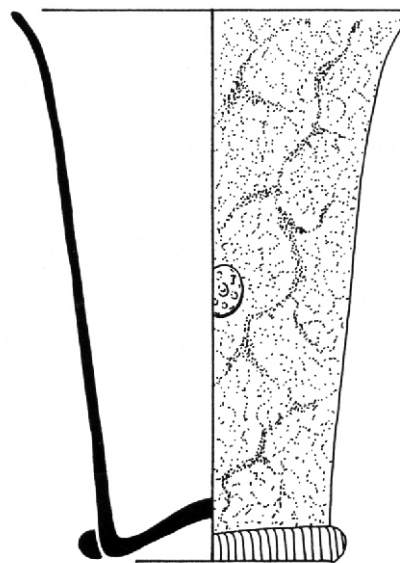


Figure 15 Cylindrical ice-glass beaker

Cylindrical beakers with optic-blown bosses, coloured trailing and ice glass beakers:  
These beaker types, all from the first half of the 17th century, although found in England, are all made in Venice or a Façon de Venise centre, such as the Low Countries. They are all found in colourless glass and appear not to have English equivalents.

#### Selected References:

Willmott, Hugh (2002) 'Early post-medieval vessel glass in England c. 1500-1670' Council for British Archaeology: CBA Research Report 132 pp. 36-42. Types 1.1 - 1.12

Crossley, D. W. and Aberg, F. A. (1972) 'Sixteenth-Century Glass-Making in Yorkshire: Excavations at Furnaces at Hutton and Rosedale, North Riding, 1968-1971' *Journal of Post Medieval Archaeology* 6 pp.136-141 (fig. 61), 146 (figs. 64 - 65)

Hurst Vose, Ruth (1994) 'Excavations at the 17th century glasshouse at Haughton Green, Denton, near Manchester.' *Journal of Post Medieval Archaeology* 28 pp.26-30 (figs. 9-11, nos. 26-68)

Haslam, J. (1993) 'Glass Vessels' in Margeson, S. (ed) (1993) 'Norwich Households - Medieval and Post-Medieval Finds from Norwich Survey Excavations 1971-78' *East Anglian Archaeology Monograph No. 58 (Norwich Survey)* pp.97-117 (pp.104-105 (fig. 70, nos. 653-658))



Cylindrical beaker with optic-blown vertical ribs

Early to mid 17th century  
Made in Germany  
Height: 16.5cm (see p.1)



Cylindrical beakers with thin-cut trailing

Mid to late 17th century  
Made in Germany  
Height: 15.0cm

Compare these beakers with the beaker from London (MoL 5148 on p.3)



Cylindrical beaker with thick-cut trailing

Mid to late 17th century  
Made in Germany  
Height: 14.0cm (see p.5)



Cylindrical beaker with mould-blown bosses

Early to mid 17th century  
Made in Germany  
Height: 8.0cm (see p.6)