

Ceramic clays from Tertiary sediments of the Tamar Trough

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Geology

A series of interconnected NNW-trending fault troughs constituting the Tamar Trough is thought to have originated in early Tertiary or late Cretaceous times. The environment was fluvial and largely deltaic and the sediments deposited consist of clay, lignite, sandy clay, sandstone and conglomerate. The thickness ranges from 100 to 1000 feet. Another basin, at Longford approximately 20 miles WSW of Launceston, has been proven to extend to a depth of 2000 feet.

Clay Production

The total clay production from the Tamar Trough over the years 1958–1967 is 290,966 cubic yards.

Average annual production for various years was:

1958 to 1961	32,000 cubic yards
1962 to 1964	40,000 cubic yards
1965 to 1967	47,000 cubic yards

All of this material was utilised in the brick, tile and pipe industry. Some years ago a limited amount of pottery was made from a near-white clay but sandy clay is the most common ceramic material quarried at present.

Reserves

The Tertiary sediments cover an area of several hundred square miles in the Launceston–Longford area. Reserves are considerable but no reliable estimate is possible at present.

Sampling

Samples were channelled from existing brick pits in Launceston. The material was thoroughly mixed, cored and quartered, and representative samples have been retained.

<i>Location</i>	<i>Latitude</i>	<i>Longitude</i>	<i>Channel width (feet)</i>	<i>Sample weight (pounds)</i>
Machen's Pit, Kings Meadows North face	41°27'56"S	147°09'09"E	34	36
Hutton's Pit, Prospect West face	41°28'07"S	147°08'14"E	19	38

These samples are ready for despatch pending their acceptance in the programme.

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