

Mortlake Potteries

Around 1744 John Sanders, a Lambeth potter, started a new manufactory at Mortlake on the site of a disused sugar house. Potteries needed substantial volumes of clay for the pots and coal for the kilns – both were heavy and unavailable locally, so waterborne transport was essential.

John Sanders remained active at Lambeth and it was his son William who ran the Mortlake venture. After William's death in 1784 the pottery was continued by his son John until 1794. The works closed in 1827.

It was the second Mortlake pottery, founded by Joseph Kishere, which really established Mortlake's reputation for pottery production. Joseph Kishere once worked at the Sanders factory and was the son of Benjamin Kishere who was overseer for Sanders. Around 1800, Joseph married Miss Griffin and "had a little money by her" which together with a win on the state lottery enabled him to begin his own business. This was located on the south side of Mortlake High Street opposite Sanders' pottery.



Only one type of ware was made here, namely salt-glaze stoneware, which is a highly-fired impervious earthenware. The glaze is achieved by throwing common salt onto the kiln fires during the firing process.

Kishere pottery has been described as among the most decorative of the London stonewares with the liberal application of plaques. These were moulded separately and fused onto the body during firing. The plaques depicted a great variety of subjects such as classical figures, windmills, cottages, drinking (and drunken) scenes. Particularly popular were hunting jugs on which horsemen and women are seen riding round the jug with numerous hounds in pursuit of a fox or deer, and some scenes include the kill. To finish the decoration, a brown wash of iron oxide was applied to the upper part of the wares by a dipping process. The Kishere pottery also made mugs, tobacco jars, spittoons, vases, stem cups, and occasional kitchen ware such as colanders.

The pottery continued in production until about 1847. Kishere pottery is now highly collectable and commands high prices.