

COMMENTS ON SAXON POTTERY REPORT

Dating

This is the first time that I have seen a definitive date given to the pottery. Until now, its always been a general 5th century - now its late 5th. This has important implications. I must admit that, on the basis of Drury and Wickenden's Crescent Road (Med. Arch. XXVI 1992, 1-40), I had always assumed an earlier 5th cent date.

You barely mention Crescent Road or their conclusions on the Saxon pottery. Clearly, the apparent disparity in pot dates between the two sites needs some comment. Is it real? Is the Crescent Road material dated correctly? Were Drury and Wickenden too eager to make a case for LR-Saxon continuity? They state a mid-5th cent abandonment of the settlement. Is a settlement shift to the north and then back viable?

Is the material comparable to that at Mucking?

SFBs

Surely, at least the Area R SFBs are closely related to those at Crescent Road. Please consider/compare the assemblages from (red = deposits with Saxon pottery):

Building 69, Area W: **015** (014, 026, **033**, 046, 049-51, 069-70) + post-hole 074 (**073**).

Building 67, Area R: **12062** (**12052**) + stakeholes 12082 (12081), 12084 (12083), 12086 (12085).

Building 68, Area R: **12228** (**12113** = **12147**), 12230 (12053, 12058, 12229, 12144) + ?post-holes 12191 (**12187**), 12192 (12185), 12193 (12186), 12194 (**12189**), 12195 (12188), 12364 (12239).

Building 65, Area L: **14203** (14204) + post-holes 14298 (14299, 14300), 14373 (14374, 14375).

Other features

There is potential to associate pit 14529 with Building 65 (albeit the latter has no Saxon pot) and ditch 25271 with Buildings 67 and 68.

Pit 14529, Area L: **14529** (**14528**, **14558**, **14613**, **14893**).

Ditch 25271, Area R: **12046** (**12044**, **12045**, **12059**, 12129, wood 12196), **12182** (12179, 12180).

Area M features:

Pit 15354 (**15353**)

Gulley/slot 15688 (**15694**)

Pit 24456 (**15862**)

Spatial distribution of Saxon pottery/Saxon features

Also see distribution plot.

No of *features* containing Saxon pottery by area:

Area	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	R	W	Unstrat
No.	2	3	2	2	6	0	1	4	7	6	2	7	0	8	15	2

Clearly scattered across the excavated parts of the settlement area.

Saxon occupation apparently did not extend as far east as Area Q (NB. None of Area A3 excavated).

Absence in central settlement Areas J and I conspicuous?

Locations along the gravel terrace edges often preferred locations for ?dwellings (i.e. SFBs)?

Building 69 represents the western edge of Saxon occupation; nothing else found across Area W.

Incidence/distribution of features with Saxon pot, by feature type

<i>Feature type</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Intrusive</i>	<i>Quantity</i> <i>Contemp.</i>	<i>Residual</i>	<i>Undated</i>
SFB (inc. integral post-holes)	3		3		
Other structural (post-holes, slots, etc.)	12		11	2	
Ditch/gully	4	1	(3)		
Pit	21	13	7 + (1)		
Layer	7	1	3 + (2)		1
Well	1	1			
Other/unknown	11	1	8		2
Unstrat and cleaning	8				8

() = potentially final infilling of late/latest Roman feature

The material that is in 'contemporary features' - i.e. the SFBs and other pits and post-holes presumably associated with this occupation - is no problem. It is the nature of the 'highly intrusive' and 'slightly intrusive' material that requires explanation. It is probably significant that the 'highly residual' stuff largely occurs in large/deep features such as pits and wells. Although we have no precise data on the position of Saxon pottery in these LIA and early to mid Roman features, it could be (conveniently) assumed that it has been deposited/accumulated in the subsidence hollows in their tops.

The 'slightly residual' material (i.e. the bracketed incidences in the above table) could either be regarded as more of the same or as the final use/infilling of late(est) Roman features. The latter is particularly likely for ditch 25271.

NB. The status of Saxon pottery in mid Roman (Period IV) pits (7 instances) is difficult to interpret. It has been regarded as intrusive here along with stuff in earlier features, but could be seen as an elongated progression of infilling?

Earlier pits with 'intrusive' Saxon pottery

Context	Feature	Type	Pot	Area	Period	Fill	Intrusive
4944	4931	Pit	1	K	II	Bottom	Yes
8807	8748	Pit	3	P	II	Single	Yes
15969	15968	Pit	1	M	II	top	On/in top
8749	8750	Pit	3	P	III	top	On/in top
10134	10133	Pit	1	F	III	single	?
11465	11477	Pit	1	N	II-III	Bottom	yes
4011	4083	Pit	1	K	IV	Top	On/in top
4844	4913	Pit	1	K	IV	Mid	Yes
10000	10062	Pit	2	E	IV	Top	On/in top
10781	10782	Pit	3	E	IV	Bottom	Yes
16073	16088	Pit	3	H	IV	Single	?
16148	16149	Pit	1	H	IV	Single	?
20020	20019	Pit	1	L	IV	Top	On/in top
8141	8142	Pit	1	E	V+	Single	?
12246	12245	Well	10	R	III	top	On/in top

Chronology of pottery distribution

Apparent residuality of some Saxon pot? See feature type table for some such info, otherwise below.

Are apparently earlier features that contained Saxon pot misdated, or was this late material sitting in subsidence hollows on top?

<i>Period</i>	<i>Quantity</i>
0	11
II	4
III	5
IV	12
V	1
V-VI	4
VI	33
VII	2

Relationship between Late Roman and early Saxon pottery

This needs further attention from both ends, although mainly from the Roman. Essentially, the Roman pottery in Saxon features/deposits is residual.

Conclusions

This comes out more as a summary than a set of conclusions. State the apparent date span of occupation - i.e. mid 5th to early 6th century? Or take on board early 5th of Crescent Road?

Who/what is the population?

To what extent are they using aspects of the Late Roman settlement, or shunning it?

How does it all pan out against the Crescent Road SFBs, or material from other places for that matter?

Slough House Farm?

Chigborough Farm?

Those in S and SE of county?

Other notes:

Top fill of 'well' 12245 (Area R, south bank) contains 10 Saxon sherds.

Other SFB's probably not recognised - e.g. look like large LIA/Roman pits.

Note apparent pairing of Area R SFBs?

Diff functions indicated by diff level of finds as well as diff morphologies?

Continued / re-use of Late Roman enclosures and boundaries?

Susan Tyler 1996 ' Early Saxon Essex AD400-700, in Bedwin (ed.), 108-116

p.108 Saxons simply utilising previously cleared/cultivated/managed land?

p.110 Saxon settlers involved either economically or militarily in the life of LR Heybridge?

Need to ref to other places. Mucking, Arndale School, Orsett,