Readme:
CTRL Section 1 Post-excavation specialist research archive;
Ceramics; Later prehistoric pottery

Six different analysts were employed, four of whom prepared specialist reports. Therefore, it was vital that a methodology was established which could provide a structure for linking the analysts and their assemblages from along the route and providing some form of consistency in the analysis and computerised data input. No such methodology had yet been developed for use on later prehistoric pottery assemblages from Kent but one does exist in the form of guidance from the Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group (PCRG 1995; 1997). This formed the basis for the present work.

Each assemblage was divided into different fabric groups on the basis of the dominant inclusion types (alpha code), and to a fabric type based on the variation within the group (numeric code). A fabric type is the definition of identifiable inclusion combinations of material type, size, density and sorting and any visible components naturally occurring in clay matrices which together can be described as different from another set of inclusion and matrix combination. Density charts (PCRG 1997, appendix 3) were used to standardise assessment of the quantity of inclusions present within the pottery fabric. All sherds were assigned to a fabric type after macroscopic examination and by using a binocular microscope (x10 power) where necessary.

All sherds were counted and weighed to the nearest whole gramme, and given a unique pottery record number for ease of reference. Diagnostic sherds were additionally assigned to a form and decorative scheme, and other characteristics noted include sherd or sherd group thickness based on codes established for ease of comparison, surface treatment and evidence of use. Table 3.1 provides a list of the various symbolic codes used within certain fields now present on the various databases for each assemblage which form the electronic archive. A field for free-text comments was also provided; however, this field was under-used by most analysts.

Table 3.1: Database codes utilised during analysis of later prehistoric pottery

Wall Thickness
1 – <5 mm
2 – 5 - <7 mm
3 – 7 - <9 mm
4 – 9 - <11 mm
5 – 11 - <13 mm
6 – 13 - <15 mm
7 – 14 - <17 mm
8 – 17 - <19 mm
9 – 19 mm +

Surface Treatment
AC – applied clay globules
AF – added flint grits (not part of fabric)
BU – burnished
CB – combed (see also as decoration)
EF – extra flint grits (not part of fabric)
FWP – finger wiped
RG – deliberate roughening
RT – rusticated (used prior to realisation that rustication is very varied)
SM – smoothed
SL – red-slipped
WP – wiped; with cloth or hand

Decoration
CB – combed (see also as surface treatment)
CD – cordon (usually applied cordon)
FN – finger-nail impression(s)
FPC – finger-pressed, finger-pinched cabling
FT – finger-tipped impression(s)

IC – incised (breaks the skin of the vessel)
IM – impressed, excluding finger-tipped, finger-nail and twisted cord variants
SL – diagonal slash(es) made by a tool rather than finger-nail
TO – tooled (pushes the surface of the vessel inwards but does not break the skin)
TW – twisted cord impression(s)

Evidence of Use
AB – abraded on interior surface or on base (not general abrasion of whole sherd)
LM – limescale
PT – pitting on the interior only, rather than throughout the fabric of the sherd(s)
RS – burnt residue
SO – soot

Position on Vessel
1 – all over; throughout
2 – exterior (general)
3 – interior (general)
4 – core of sherd(s) only, or one surface of a sherd flake
5 – rim interior
6 – upper vessel interior
7 – upper vessel exterior
8 – lower vessel interior
9 – lower vessel exterior
10 – top of rim
11 – neck to body joining zone
12 – through the base or on the underside of the base
13 – shoulder

Featured sherds were recorded on and sketched at 1:1 on individual featured sherd record sheets which form part of the paper archive. Parallel form types have been sought from within and outside the Kent area, using published and unpublished material. The computer programmes Microsoft Excel and Access have been used to store analyse and summarise the data.

Deviation from the standard single alpha coding of principal inclusion within fabric types developed after two assemblages (Little Stock Farm and Cobham Golf Course) had been analysed. It was determined that considerable variation occurred amongst the clay matrices utilised in this region and that it was likely to be extremely significant to record this where possible. In addition, often more than one type of temper or naturally-occurring inclusion could be identified which contributed significantly to the nature of the fabric. A two-alpha system was introduced whereby the first alpha was meant to be the most common inclusion observed and the second alpha the next most common. However, this was not always adhered to by all analysts and unfortunately inconsistency in the application of this methodological procedure entered the classification of fabrics. When using the detailed information about an assemblage and associated database, it may be necessary to check the actual description to determine if the method was applied strictly in correct order of inclusion density or whether it was followed only generally with both inclusion types representing significant frequency.

It was possible to identify more than one ceramic phase within certain site assemblages. A ceramic phase is defined on the basis of the presence of material comprising a chronologically coherent group of fabrics and forms, and occasionally decoration, which are different from another set of these characteristics from the same site. Not all assemblages displayed this variation and therefore were single ceramic phase assemblages, while others contained many phases. These phases are solely an internal site assemblage phenomena and do not have wider scheme-wide relevance. The correlation of different ceramic phases across the scheme is defined by the common period names such as Late Bronze Age or Middle Iron Age.