

**Channel Tunnel Rail Link  
London and Continental Railways  
Oxford Wessex Archaeology Joint Venture**

**The early prehistoric pottery from Cobham Golf  
Course, Cobham, Kent (ARC CGC 98)**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

A total of 48 sherds (156 g) were recovered, the majority of which came from the fill of the ring ditch and are of Early Bronze Age (EBA) date. In total three EBA vessels are represented by rim sherds, although it is not certain if these derive from Food Vessels or Collared Urns. Redeposited Early Neolithic sherds were also recovered from the ring ditch and a pit (153). The condition of the assemblage was generally broken and worn, supporting the suggestion that most of the material was recovered from secondary contexts.

*Table 1: Quantification of Neolithic and Bronze Age pottery by feature*

(EN=Early Neolithic, MN=Middle Neolithic, EBA=Early Bronze Age, Preh=Prehistoric. CU=Collared Urn. FV=Food Vessel)

| Feature | Context | Sherd count | Sherd weight (g) | Ware            | Number of vessels | Illustrated vessels | Comments       |
|---------|---------|-------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| 153     | 152     | 3           | 17               | EN/MN and Preh. | 0                 | 0                   | small and worn |
| 224     | 223     | 36          | 107              | CU/FV and EBA   | 3                 | 3                   |                |
| 224     | 227     | 2           | 6                | EBA and EN/MN   | 0                 | 0                   |                |
| 224     | 233     | 2           | 8                | EN/MN and CU/FV | 0                 | 0                   |                |
| 224     | 242     | 5           | 18               | EBA             | 0                 | 0                   |                |
| Totals  |         | 48          | 156              |                 | 3                 | 3                   |                |

## 2 FABRICS

The main tempering materials within this assemblage are quartzitic sands, grog and flint. The flint fabrics are exclusively earlier Neolithic whilst the grog and sand are exclusively early Bronze Age. The grog inclusions occur rarely and are angular to subangular in shape. It is possible that many of these are naturally occurring argillaceous rock fragments (Whitbread 1996).

These fabrics demonstrate a culturally determined exploitation of local geological deposits, which include Upper Chalk, overlain by the silty sands (both glauconitic and quartzitic) and sandy clays of the Thanet, Woolwich (argillaceous, shelly, dark and organic marine clay), and Blackheath Beds (Geological Survey Sheet 272; Sumbler 1996; Anderton *et al.* 1983).

Table 2: Fabric descriptions

(NAT=no added temper, A=sand, F=flint, G=grog; EN=Early Neolithic, MN=Middle Neolithic, EBA=Early Bronze Age)

| Fabric code | Description   |
|-------------|---|
| NAT         | Prehistoric. A grey unoxidised fabric with 10% voids - leached shell? Possibly rare, fine sand. (context 152, 233)                |
| F1          | EN/MN. 20% >1 mm flint, well sorted, evenly dispersed, 5% small voids <1 mm. (context 233)  |
| F3          | EN/MN. Well sorted, unevenly dispersed flint, 5-10%, angular lumps 4-5 mm   |
| AF1         | EN/MN. Sandy, unoxidised with sparse, >1 mm flint, sub-rounded pieces. Have the appearance of occurring naturally. (context 227 ) |
| A1          | EBA. Sandy oxidised with no inclusions and no visible argillaceous rock fragments. (context 227)                                  |
| G1          | EBA. Rare >1 mm angular grog. One naturally occurring piece of quartz and a void showing impression of a shell. (context 242)     |
| G3          | EBA. Rare angular to sub-rounded grog, oxidised in brown-black matrix. 2-3 voids, leached calcareous material?                    |
| GA1         | EBA. Rare >1 mm angular grog. 10% fine sand. (context 233)  |

### 3 VESSEL FORMS

Only three diagnostic sherds are present, two rims and one decorated rim bevel. Rim sherd P1 is a simple, cord decorated rim which could belong to either Collared Urn or Food Vessel traditions (Burgess 1980, 92, figure 3.3; Longworth 1984; Kinnes and Longworth 1985). Rim sherd P2 is internally beaded and is not easily paralleled in either tradition but is both fired similarly and manufactured from the same fabric as rim sherd P1. P3 is slightly thinner walled and not complete, being broken at the rim tip. This has a concave bevel, is decorated with impressed cord and is in a fabric containing larger and more irregularly shaped 'grog' inclusions. This sherd is possibly more likely to be a Collared Urn rim due to its particular form (Kinnes and Longworth 1985). There are only two published examples of Food Vessels from Kent (Champion in Leach 1982) and few Collared Urns (Longworth 1984, 216-217), mostly from the north-east and the Isle of Thanet; no new vessels have been published recently.

### 4 GENERAL DISCUSSION

The earliest pottery from the site comprises a small collection of Earlier Neolithic sherds recovered as redeposited material from a Middle Bronze Age pit and from the ring ditch. This indicates some Early to Middle Neolithic domestic activity on this site.

The early Bronze Age sherds recovered from the ring ditch are important as both Food Vessels and Collared Urns are rare in Kent. These sherds could have derived from either domestic, ritual and/or funerary activity, although the most likely explanation is that they came from disturbed cremation deposits that were placed at the edge of the barrow mound. If this is the case then the sherds can be used to date the use of the barrow to the Early Bronze Age (2100-1500 cal BC). The only two published examples of Food Vessels come from Deal and Ashford (Champion in Leach 1982). Both Food Vessels and Collared Urns have been

discovered as part of the CTRL project at Saltwood Tunnel and Northumberland Bottom (Edwards 2006a; 2006b).

## 5 CATALOGUE OF ILLUSTRATED VESSELS

### *Figure 1*

P1. Ditch 234, context 233. One rim (23 g). Form: simple flat topped rim with single line of impressed cord. Fabric: GA1. Firing: ext; BR, int; BR, int; BR. Decoration: One single line of decoration on rim top. ST: ext; SM, int; SM. Th: 10 mm. Rim Diam; ext; 300 mm.

P2. Ditch 234, context 233. One rim (7 g). Form: Incurved and pointed rim with internal bead. Fabric: G3. Firing: ext; BR, int; BR, int; BR. Decoration: None. ST: ext; SM, int; SM. Th: 5 mm.

P3. Ditch 234, context 233. One rim bevel (4 g). Form: Concave bevel. Fabric: GA1. Firing: ext; BR, int; YBR-BR, int; BR. Decoration: int; Impressed cord, ext; impressed cord diagonal lines. ST: ext; SM, int; SM. Th: 10 mm.

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