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The early prehistoric pottery from Eyhorne Street, Hollingbourne, Kent (ARC 420 68+100-68+500 99)

by Emily Edwards

CTRL Specialist Report Series

2006

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1 INTRODUCTION

This assemblage consisted of 86 Neolithic sherds (566 g), of which 38% (of sherd count) were identified as Grooved Ware, 30% as Beaker, 7% as early Neolithic, 23% as either early or middle Neolithic and 1% as early Bronze Age (see Table 1). A total of eleven vessels were identified, which were signified by sherds of worn to average condition; an average sherd weight per context ranged from 1 to 42 g.

Table 1: Breakdown of Neolithic and early Bronze Age pottery

Feature	Context	Sherd count	Sherd weight (g)	Ware	Number of vessels	Illustrated vessels	Comments
Pit 23	22	6	34	EN	1	P11	
Pit 23	22	22	191	BKR	3	P7-10	
	24	3	4	EN OR MN			
Pit 60	61	1	54	EBA	1	P12	
Pit 100	104	20	70	EN/PW/E	1	P1	
Pit 21	20	11	29	GW/DW	0	0	
Posthole 19	18	22	181	GW/DW	5	P2-6	
Treehole 89	88	1	3	BKR	0	0	A base
Total		86	566				

2 FABRICS

A total of 12 fabrics were recorded (Table 2). The early and middle Neolithic sherds are typically laminated, and tempered with poorly-sorted flint and sand. Late Neolithic sherds contain grog, sand and some naturally occurring flint. Beaker sherds are tempered with flint, grog and sand.

Eyhorne Street lies on the Folkstone Beds; bordered to the north by Gault Clay and to south by the Hythe Beds. There are nearby deposits of Fourth Terrace river gravels and a stream also runs through part of the site. The clay is likely to have derived from the Gault and may have been exposed in the local stream. As the local geology is sandy, and chalk downland only 2 km to the north, it is likely that the resources were all local (Arnold 1981) and that most of the sparsely tempered fabrics contain naturally occurring material. Sand may derive from the Folkestone Beds, the chalk and flint from the Middle Chalk or the river gravels and the possibly argillaceous clay from the Gault.

The early flint fabrics contained large, sharp, more densely distributed fragments that are probably deliberately added. Petrological analysis might identify some of the ‘grog’ as being argillaceous rock fragments as occurring in the Gault clay (Whitbread 1986).

The preparation of clays for the manufacture and firing of the pots was minimal; eight of the fabrics contain less than 10% inclusions, which may be too sparse to alter the performance of the vessel (Rye 1981; *cf* Tite *et al.* 2001). These vessels were clearly used despite this as vessel P6 (fabric G1) is covered with charred residue. The fabric usage at

Eyhorne Street may, therefore, have been culturally determined, rather than being related to technological development (Edwards unpublished; Skibo and Schiffer 1997, 27-50; Tite *et al.* 2001, 301-324; Feathers *et al.* 2003, 163-183; Woods 1986, 157-72).

Table 2: Description of fabrics

Fabric Name	Period	Fabric description
A1	EN	Common (20%), fine to coarse sand
F2	EN	Large, rare (2%) flint up to 6 mm. No sand, soapy texture.
F3	EN/PW/E	Common (20%), unevenly distributed flint, up to 6 mm.
FPfe1	EN/PW/E	Clean closed clay containing tiny sparse (5%) flints, up to 1 mm and sparse (3%) ferruginous pellets
G1	GW/DW & EBA	Sparse (3%) 1 mm, angular and complete domains or fragments of grog
G2	GW/DW & BKR	Common (20%) angular (and always oxidised) grog
GA1	GW/DW	Sparse (3%) 1 mm, angular chunks of grog. Common (20%), coarse sand up to 1 mm.
GF1	GW/DW	Sparse (3%) 1 mm, angular and complete domains or fragments of grog. Rare sub-angular flint.
FGA1	BKR	Rare (1%) flint and sparse rounded and angular sand, glauconitic and quartzitic. Sparse, angular and complete domains or fragments of grog.
AF1	BKR	Rare (1%) flint and quartzitic sand
FA2	EN & BKR	Rare (2%) large flint up to 5 mm. Moderate sand and rare Pfe
ChA1	BKR	Rare (1%) chalk, up to 1 mm. Common fine sand, less than 0.1 mm.

3 FORMS/TYPES

Two of the illustrated vessels (Grooved Ware vessel P6 and Beaker vessel P7) provided partial profiles; the early and middle Neolithic sherds were too broken and abraded for form types to be identified. Early and middle Neolithic vessel forms include a fragment from pit 22, consisting of a squared rim possibly deriving from an early Neolithic carinated bowl, and the Ebbsfleet Ware rim from pit 100 (P1).

The Grooved Ware from features 19 and 20 appears to display a mixture of both Clacton type decoration and Durrington Wall form. The Grooved Ware vessel (P6) is a tall straight sided or splayed jar with a closed top, a typical late style Durrington Walls form (Garwood, 1999, 157-9, fig. 15.6). The horizontally arranged grooved bands are, however, more usual for Clacton style vessels (ibid.). This vessel is associated with an upright, bevelled, horizontally decorated rim (P5) and an unusual sherd showing a possible 'Greek Key' motif (P3). The use of both herringbone and grooves arranged into right angled shapes is very unusual and the only parallels can be found on the chalk plaques from Amesbury, near Stonehenge (Harding 1988, 323 and plate 20). Whilst rims closely paralleling P5 can be found amongst the Durrington Walls assemblage (Longworth 1971, 114, fig. 50, P258), the combination of an upright, bevelled form with internal and external horizontal grooves and a

diagonally decorated top, appears to be rare. It is possible that this rim is also influenced by Clacton styles, if not part of a Clacton ware vessel.

The Beaker material all came from one feature, pit 23, which contained a mixture vessel styles. Vessels P7 and P10 were all thin-walled, comb-decorated vessels in a flint and grog tempered fabric, whilst P8 and P9 were fingernail-rusticated vessels manufactured from either sandier or soapier fabrics. P7 is roughly 12% complete and represents a short vessel with a long upright neck and globular belly similar to Clarke's S1 style. The decoration on this vessel, including floating lozenges, is also typical of this style; examples have been found at Manston (Gibson 1990), Brendly (Clarke 1970, 774) and Capel-le-Ferne (ibid., 741). Similar forms are found within the Northern styles, examples of which have been found at Folkestone (ibid., 633), Dover (ibid., 397) and Capel-le-Ferne (ibid., 629). The four Beakers found with inhumations at Monkton (Macpherson-Grant 1994, 262-3), in east Kent, are very similar in form and in decoration.

P8 possibly represents as little as 5% of the original vessel but is clearly a large pot-sized, late Southern Style or FP style Beaker, of which there are no published examples from Kent (Clarke 1970; Lanting and van der Waals 1972; Case 1993). The decoration on this vessel is as unusual in Kent, as the form. The piercing appears to be a pre-firing drill hole, rather than a post-firing mend (Cleal 1988). This observation is based on the fact that inner surface of the hole is oxidised, unlike the core of the vessel. It is presumed that the complete vessel would have had a pair of holes. A close parallel can be found in the late style Southern Beaker from Hockwold-cum-Wilton; this is decorated with paired finger nail impressions and also has a drilled hole at the shoulder (Case 1993, 258 fig. 13.5). A fingernail-rusticated Beaker from The Hamel, Oxford (Case 1980, 132, fig. 3.7), is drilled although it is not clear whether this hole was also made before firing.

4 CHRONOLOGY AND PHASING

The assemblage derives from six features consisting of four pits, a posthole and a treethrow hole. The possible Ebbsfleet Ware from pit 100 is worn and broken into small fragments. The remaining early Neolithic material is clearly residual, occurring as it does in a Beaker pit (pit 23) containing typologically late style Beaker. The Durrington Walls style Grooved Ware, possible late, is freshly broken into large fragments; it is fragile and thus very unlikely to be residual.

5 GENERAL DISCUSSION

This assemblage is small but offers indications of possible domestic activity throughout the Neolithic. The presence of possible Carinated Bowl and Ebbsfleet Ware, although in such small quantities, is a significant indication of continual use of the site. The range of forms and

fabrics, especially notable within the Grooved Ware and Beaker features, suggests domestic activity, a suggestion supported by the charred residue on the Grooved Ware (P6, P4). The raw materials appear to have been procured very locally; some of the inclusions noted in the fabrics are likely to be naturally occurring.

Both the Beaker and Grooved Ware assemblages are notable. The Grooved Ware is stylistically peculiar, as has been outlined above, and is influenced by both Durrington Wall and Clacton styles. The 'Greek Key' decoration on P5 is closer to designs on the chalk plaques from Amesbury and has no parallels within published Grooved Ware assemblages. This may suggest contacts outside of the immediate locality on the part of the potters. Other sherds (P2 and P4) have decoration more typical of the Durrington Walls tradition. One Beaker vessel (P7) has parallels from burial contexts within Kent (Clarke 1970), whilst vessel P8 has none. The latter also has the unusual addition of a prefiring drilled hole.

6 CATALOGUE OF ILLUSTRATED VESSELS

Figure 1

P1. Early Neolithic or Ebbsfleet style Peterborough Ware, 1 sherd (3 g). Context 104, Feature 100. Fabric: A1. Form: Simple, pointed rim. Firing: ext; RBR, core; RBR, int; RBR. ST: ext; SM, int; SM. Th: 4 mm.

P2. Rim of Durrington Walls style Grooved Ware, 2 sherds (41 g). Context 18, posthole 19. Fabric: G2. Form: Internally bevelled rim. Firing: ext; BR, core; BR, int; BR. Decoration: ext; grooved filled triangles. ST: int; abraded and pitted internal surface. Th: 8 mm.

P3. Rim and upper body of Durrington Walls style Grooved Ware, one sherd (12 g). Context 18, posthole 19. Fabric: simple, upright pointed rim. G1. Form: Firing: ext; RBR, core; BR, int; BR. Decoration: ext; grooved herringbone and right angled 'Greek Key' shape. ST: ext; SM, int; SM. Th: 5 mm.

P4. Body of Durrington Walls style Grooved Ware, one sherd (27 g). Context 18, posthole 19. Fabric: GA1. Firing: ext; YBR, core; BR, int; BL. Decoration: ext; remains of a vertical cordon and horizontal, shallow grooves. ST: ext; SM, int; SM. Charred Residue on the internal face. Th: 10 mm.

P5. Rim of Durrington Walls style Grooved Ware, one sherd (19 g). Context 18, posthole 19. Fabric: G1. Form: Incurved and internally bevelled rim. Firing: ext; BR, core; BR, int; BR. Decoration: ext; Deep horizontal grooves, top of rim; diagonal grooves, interval bevel; Deep horizontal grooves. ST: ext; SM, int; SM. Charred Residue on the internal face. Th: 10 mm.

P6. Upper body of a Grooved Ware jar of late style Durrington Wall form and Clacton style decoration, 8 sherds (85 g). Contexts 18 and 20, postholes 19 and 21. Fabric: G1. Form: Incurved and internally expanded rim, upright walls. Firing: ext; RBR-BL, core; BR, int; BR. Decoration: ext; horizontal grooves, top of rim and on body, with rows of finger nail. ST: ext; SM, int; SM. Much charred residue on the external face of the upper most sherds. Th: 7 mm.

P7. Upper body of a stylistically late, S4 type Beaker, 16 sherds (86 g). Context 22, pit 23. Fabric: FGA1. Form: Upright rim and neck Firing: ext; BR, core; BR, int; BR. Decoration:

ext; Impressed comb arranged in horizontal lines, diamonds and herringbone. In places the herringbone becomes messy. ST: ext; SM, int; SM. Th: 8 mm. Rim Diam: 105 mm.

P8. Upper body of a large and stylistically late, Southern or FP type Beaker, 1 sherd (71 g).). Context 22, pit 23. Fabric: G2. Form: Upright rim with internal, concave bevel and S shaped neck. Firing: ext; BR, core; BR, int; BR. Decoration: ext; finger nail rusticated and plasticated decoration with two cordons and impressed twisted cord. ST: ext; SM, int; SM. The coil joins are very evident and the hole was created before the firing of the vessel. Th: 6-11 mm

P9. Decorated body sherd of Beaker, 1 sherd (16 g). Context 22, pit 23. Fabric: AF1. Firing: ext; YBR, core; YBR, int; YBR. Decoration: ext; finger nail impressed. ST: ext; SM, int; SM. Th: 9 mm.

P10. One Beaker body sherd (5 g). Context 22, pit 23. Fabric: FG1. Firing: ext; YBR, core; YBR, int; YBR. Decoration: ext; comb impressed. ST: ext; SM, int; SM. Th: 9 mm.

P11. One Beaker body sherd (4 g). Context 22, pit 23. Fabric: A1. Firing: ext; YBR, core; G, int; BR. Decoration: ext; comb decoration. ST: ext; SM, int; SM. Th: 5 mm.

P12. One whole early Bronze Age base (54 g). Context 22, pit 23. Fabric: G1. Firing: ext; YBR, core; bl, int; BR. ST: ext; SM, int; SM. Th: 8 mm.

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