

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

**The later prehistoric pottery from Church Lane,  
Smeeth, Kent (ARC CHL98)**

by Grace Pepetua Jones

**CTRL Specialist Report Series**

**2006**

**©London and Continental Railways**

All rights including translation, reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior written permission of London and Continental Railways.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>FABRICS.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>FORMS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
	4.1 Surface treatment and evidence of use .....	6
<b>5</b>	<b>DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>6</b>

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1: Quantification of later prehistoric pottery. ....	3
Table 2: Quantification of later prehistoric fabrics .....	4

## 1 INTRODUCTION

A total of 50 sherds of later prehistoric pottery, weighing 369 g, was recovered by hand from a detailed excavation at Church Lane, Smeeth, Kent (ARC CHL 98). The material derived from ploughsoil and subsoil layers 500, 501, 502, 525 and 527, and two features, ditches 508 and 512. The pottery was in average to poor condition, with a mean sherd weight of 7.3 g. The most abraded pottery originated from the subsoil layers. Post depositional concretions were noted on sherds from layers 500 and 501. On the basis of the inclusions present within the fabrics, as well as diagnostic form and decoration types, the bulk of the assemblage may be placed in the middle Bronze Age phase. Pottery dating solely from this phase accounted for 70% of the total sherd count of the assemblage and 81% of the total weight. Material from the late Neolithic/early Bronze Age to the late Iron Age periods was also identified, but in much smaller quantities. Layers 500 and 501, and ditch 508, contained material dating from more than one ceramic phase (Table 1).

*Table 1: Quantification of later prehistoric pottery.*

Context	Feature	Count	Weight (g)	Ceramic phase
500	Ploughsoil	8	146	Middle Bronze Age to late Iron Age
501	Subsoil	16	63	Middle Bronze Age to early Iron Age
502	Subsoil	1	12	Middle Bronze Age
509	Ditch 508	9	52	Beaker to late Bronze Age / early Iron Age
512	Cut of ditch	10	71	Middle Bronze Age
525	Subsoil	4	13	Middle Bronze Age
527	Subsoil	2	12	Middle Bronze Age

## 2 METHODOLOGY

The pottery was recorded using the methodology designed for the route-wide scheme, in accordance with the recommendations set out by the Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group (PCRG 1997).

## 3 FABRICS

The site lies on the Atherfield Clay of the Lower Greensand. It is in close proximity to other deposits of the Lower Greensand including the Hythe Beds, Sandgate Beds and Folkestone Beds. Outcrops of Wealden Clay and Gault are also located within 7km of the site. Drift deposits include the alluvium, 4th Terrace river gravels and Head Brickearth (Ordnance Survey, Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheets 305 and 306). The inclusions identified in the fabrics are all available in the local geology (defined as less than 7 km, cf. Arnold 1985), suggesting local pottery production (Morris 1994a and 1994b).

The pottery fabrics contained flint, grog, quartz and iron inclusions, with one fabric containing possible sandstone. These were classified using an alphanumeric system, designed to reflect the principal inclusions in the fabrics. The following letters have been used to

denote inclusions: F (flint), G (grog), Q (quartz), I (iron) and R (rock). The quantification of each fabric is shown in Table 2. The following grain size classifications have been used: coarse silt, <0.06 mm; very fine sand, >0.06-<0.13 mm; fine sand, >0.13-<0.25 mm; medium sand, >0.25-<0.5 mm; coarse sand, >0.5-<1 mm; very coarse sand, >1-<2 mm; granules, >2-<4 mm (after Adams *et al*, 1984 in PCRG 1997, 51).

Table 2: *Quantification of later prehistoric fabrics*

Fabric	Ceramic phase	Count	% of count	Weight (g)	% of weight
F1	MBA	8	16	89	24.1
F2	MBA	4	8	12	3.3
F3	LMBA-LBA/EIA	7	14	30	8.1
F4	MBA	16	32	163	44.1
F5	MBA	7	14	36	9.8
FI1	LBA/EIA	1	2	8	2.2
G1	LIA	1	2	6	1.6
GF1	LNEBA-EBA	1	2	6	1.6
I1	LPR	1	2	4	1.1
Q1	MBA-LBA	1	2	2	0.5
Q2	LPR	1	2	3	0.8
QF1	LBA-EIA	1	2	5	1.4
R1	LPR	1	2	5	1.4

F1 A soft, but harsh fabric containing sparse to moderate (7-10%) sub-angular to angular calcined flint,  $\leq 4$  mm, poorly sorted; rare (1%) sub-rounded iron oxides,  $\leq 1$  mm. The clay matrix is slightly silty, with occasional medium to coarse quartz grains. The sherds break with a conchoidal fracture. This fabric has been placed in the middle Bronze Age ceramic phase.

F2 A soft, but harsh fabric containing sparse (3-5%) sub-angular to angular calcined flint,  $\leq 6$  mm, most are approximately 3 mm, moderately sorted. The clay matrix is silty and contains abundant well sorted quartz of silt to very fine size. The fresh fracture is conchoidal. This fabric has been placed in the middle Bronze Age ceramic phase.

F3 A sandy fabric containing moderate to common (15-20%) sub-angular to angular calcined flint fragments, 1-2 mm, moderate to well sorted; sparse (3%) well rounded iron oxides,  $\leq 1$  mm; and rare (1-2%) rounded quartz sand,  $\leq 1$  mm, including pink and clear, colourless grains and possible glauconite. The fresh fracture is conchoidal. The possible date range for this fabric is broad, ranging from the mid-late Bronze Age transitional period, to the end of the early Iron Age.

F4 A soft, harsh fabric containing common (20%) angular calcined flint fragments,  $\leq 6$  mm, most are 2-3 mm, moderately sorted. The clay matrix is slightly silty. This is a classic middle Bronze Age fabric, and includes one sherd from a bucket urn.

F5 A sandy fabric containing very common (25-30%) angular calcined flint fragments,  $\leq 2$  mm, most are  $\leq 0.5$  mm, poorly sorted. The clay matrix is slightly silty, and the fracture is irregular. This fabric is not dissimilar to a globular urn fabric and has been placed in the middle Bronze Age ceramic phase.

FI1 A sandy fabric containing sparse to moderate (7-10%) sub-angular to angular flint,  $\leq 2$  mm, moderately sorted; and sparse (3%) sub-rounded iron oxides,  $\leq 3$  mm. The clay matrix is sandy and contains silt sized quartz grains. The fresh fracture is slightly hackly. This fabric could be dated no more closely than the earlier part of the first millennium BC.

G1 A very soft and soapy fabric containing moderate to common (15-20%) sub-angular grog,  $\leq 3$  mm, moderately sorted. The clay matrix is slightly silty. The fabric breaks with an irregular fracture. It has been placed in the late Iron Age ceramic phase.

GF1 A soft, soapy fabric containing sparse (5-7%) sub-angular grog,  $\leq 3$  mm, poorly sorted; sparse (5%) angular flint,  $\leq 2$  mm, well sorted, and rare (1%) rounded iron oxides,  $\leq 1$  mm. The clay matrix is not sandy and the fresh fracture is irregular. This fabric is indicative of the Beaker ceramic tradition.

I1 A soft, slightly soapy fabric containing common (20%) sub-rounded to rounded black and red iron oxides or iron ore,  $\leq 4$  mm, moderately sorted. The clay matrix contains silt sized quartz grains. The fabric could be dated no more closely than the later prehistoric period.

Q1 A soft, sandy fabric containing sparse (7%), coarse, sub-angular quartz grains,  $\leq 0.5$  mm, well sorted, against a clay matrix containing fine to silt sized grains which are not clearly visible at x30 magnification. The fabric also contains rare (1-2%) organic matter and 1% detrital flint,  $\leq 2$  mm. It has a date range of the middle Bronze Age to the late Bronze Age.

Q2 A soft, sandy fabric containing very common (25%) coarse quartz sand, sub-rounded to rounded, moderately sorted; and common (20%) sub-angular to angular gravel inclusions,  $\leq 2$  mm, moderately sorted. It could be dated no more closely than the later prehistoric period.

QF1 A soft, sandy fabric containing moderate to common (15-20%) sub-rounded, coarse sized quartz grains, moderately sorted; and moderate (10-15%) angular, calcined flint,  $< 1$  mm, well sorted, with occasional larger pieces of detritus,  $\leq 5$  mm. The fresh fracture is irregular. This fabric could be dated no more closely than the earlier part of the first millennium BC.

R1 A sandy fabric containing moderate (10%) possible sandstone fragments,  $< 7$  mm, poorly sorted. The sherd was extremely abraded, the fresh fracture was hackly. It could be dated no more closely than the later prehistoric period.

#### 4 FORMS

The later prehistoric pottery assemblage from Church Lane consisted primarily of undiagnostic body sherds. Two small rim sherds were recorded. The first is flat-topped and squared, and was recovered from context 502. The vessel profile is uncertain and less than 5% of the vessel diameter is present. The fabric (F4) contains coarse flint temper and is synonymous with the Deverel-Rimbury ceramic tradition. The plain undifferentiated nature of the rim indicates it may derive from a middle Bronze Age bucket urn form. This is supported by the discovery of a cordoned sherd from a bucket urn in context 500, again in coarse ware fabric F4.

The second rim is rounded and slightly everted, originating from a necked vessel. It was recovered from context 500. Less than 5% of the rim diameter is present and it was not possible to ascertain the profile. The rim is in fabric QF1 and could not be dated more closely than the later prehistoric period.

#### 4.1 Surface treatment and evidence of use

The single G1 (grog tempered) sherd had been burnished on both sides indicating that it was probably from a bowl form. Burnt residue was noted on a single flint-tempered sherd from ditch 512.

### 5 DISCUSSION

Most of the later prehistoric pottery assemblage from Church Lane can be placed in the middle Bronze Age ceramic phase, on the basis of fabric type and the presence of a diagnostic cordoned sherd and a plain rim from two different bucket urns. Slope erosion has removed possible features that may have been present on the upper areas of the site and pottery was recovered from only two negative features, ditches 508 and 512. The PCRG recommends that a minimum of 25-30 sherds is required to date a feature (PCRG 1997, 21). As neither ditch contained more than ten sherds the pottery cannot be confidently used to phase the ditches. Notwithstanding, the assemblage represents low-level activity at the Church Lane site during the middle Bronze Age period.

### 6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Arnold, D, 1985 *Ceramic theory and cultural process*, Cambridge

Morris, E L, 1994a Production and distribution of pottery and salt in Iron Age Britain: a review, *Proc Prehist Soc*, **60**, 371-93

Morris, E L, 1994b The organisation of pottery production and distribution in Iron Age Wessex, in *The Iron Age in Wessex: Recent Work* (eds A P Fitzpatrick and E L Morris), Association Française d'Etude de l'Age du Fer/Trust for Wessex Archaeol, Salisbury, 26-29

PCRG, 1997 *The study of later prehistoric pottery: general policies and guidelines for analysis and publication*, Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group occasional papers **1** and **2**, Oxford (revised ed)