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

# The later prehistoric pottery from Sandway Road, Lenham, Kent (ARC SWR98)

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#### **1** INTRODUCTION

A total of 80 sherds of later prehistoric pottery, weighing 535 g, was recovered during the evaluation at Sandway Road (Table 1). The material derived from two features, pit 363208 and ditch 357703. The pottery was in average to poor condition, with a mean sherd weight of 6.7 g. 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. There is a small component of less identifiable sherds, which can be phased no more closely than the later prehistoric period.

#### Table 1: Quantification of later prehistoric pottery

Context	Feature	Count	Weight (g)	Ceramic phase
357704	Ditch 357703	75	528	Middle Bronze Age
357708	Ditch 357703	2	4	Middle Bronze Age
363207	Pit 363208	3	3	Later prehistoric

#### 2 METHODOLOGY

The pottery was recovered by hand in the field, and the later prehistoric component has been analysed in its entirety. The recording system recommended by the Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group (PCRG 1997) has been followed, and all data recorded onto pro forma sheets and then transferred to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet for analysis. Each sherd, or group of related sherds, was given a pottery record number (PRN) as a unique identifier. The fabric codes used for the recording system are alphanumeric, the letter or letters indicating the dominant inclusion, and the number used to differentiate between fabrics with the same major inclusions. Quantification is by count, weight and estimated vessel equivalent (EVE). Form type and vessel wall thickness have been recorded, plus the presence and location of surface treatments, decoration and evidence of use. All identifiable rim sherds have also been recorded onto separate featured sherd pro formas and sketched at 1:1. Two vessels, a decorated globular jar and a small perforated lug, were selected for illustration.

#### **3** FABRICS

The site lies on the Folkestone Beds of the lower Greensand, with deposits of Gault clay, chalk, clay-with-flints, alluvium and Fourth Terrace gravels present in the immediate vicinity. Flint, ironstone and quartz pebbles are found in a sandy matrix in the Fourth Terrace deposits (Worssam 1963, 118). The inclusions identified in the fabrics are all available locally (defined as less than 7 km distant; cf. Arnold 1985) and could have provided the resources for the pottery fabrics.

The quantification of each fabric is shown in Table 2. This includes one fabric recorded as F99 and not described in detail due to the small sherd size (<1 g).

Fabric	Ceramic phase	Count	% of count	Weight (g)	% of weight
F1	MBA	29	36.3	298	55.7
F2	MBA	8	10.0	37	6.9
F99	LPR	2	2.5	1	0.2
Q1	LPR	2	2.5	3	0.6
Q2	LPR	1	1.3	2	0.4
Z1	MBA	23	28.8	54	10.1
Z2	MBA	15	18.8	140	26.2
Totals		80	100.0	535	100.0

#### Table 2: Quantification of later prehistoric fabrics

F1. A soft, harsh, fine to intermediate fabric containing common to very common (20-25%) crushed, angular, calcined flint,  $\leq 1.5$  mm, moderate to well sorted and rare (1%) red iron oxides, rounded, <1 mm. The clay matrix is not obviously sandy but may contain quartz grains not visible using a binocular microscope at x30 power.

F2. A soft, rough, coarse ware fabric containing very common (25%) crushed, angular, calcined flint,  $\leq 5$  mm, most fragments are >2 mm, poorly sorted. The clay matrix is not obviously sandy.

Q1. A soft, sandy, intermediate fabric with very common (25-30%) sub-angular quartz sand,  $\leq 0.6$  mm, mostly fine to medium sized grains with a number of coarser sub-angular grains, well sorted. Can contain 1% quartzite as part of the sand component. Rare (2%) angular flint fragments,  $\leq 2$  mm. This fabric could not be dated more closely than the later prehistoric period.

Q2. A soft, sandy, fine to intermediate fabric containing very common (30%) glauconite and quartz grains; the glauconite is fine to medium sized and very well rounded; the quartz is medium to coarse sized, rounded glassy grains. There are also occasional pieces of flint detritus that do not appear to have been deliberately added.

Z1. A soft, sandy and slightly soapy, fine fabric containing moderate (10-15%) very angular quartzite, 0.5-1.5 mm, moderately sorted. Sparse (3-5%) sub-rounded to sub-angular fine to medium sized quartz grains are also present.

Z2. A soft, sandy and slightly soapy, intermediate fabric containing very common (30%) well-processed quartzite, with most fragments  $\leq 0.25$  mm, well sorted, very angular and jagged, but a scatter (up to 7%) of larger fragments,  $\leq 2$  mm is also present.

#### 4 FORMS

Two vessels could be identified as globular jars, or urns, of the Deverel-Rimbury ceramic tradition. The term jar will be used here, rather than urn, as the vessels were not recovered from a funerary context (cf Gibson 2002, 145). The first of these (Fig. 1, No. 1) was represented by 28 sherds (296 g); 40% of the rim was present (0.4 EVE). The vessel was in a fine to intermediate ware fabric, F1, which contained well processed flint fragments. The rim of the vessel was undifferentiated, but had been pinched towards the top. The neck area is unrestricted, and the low shoulder rounds to a globular body form. Immediately above the shoulder three forms of decoration are visible. The uppermost consists of four incised lines. These are fairly irregular in their execution and although they run approximately parallel they

can be seen to meet in some areas. Beneath these lines are two rows of stabbed circular decoration which were more regularly applied. Beneath the stabbed decoration are at least two tooled wavy lines. Burnishing was noted on both surfaces, often taking the form of burnished lines rather than a full coverage. Small patches of possible sooting were seen along the upper exterior of the vessel.

The fabric of the Sandway Road vessel is very similar to that of a globular jar recovered from Kemsley, Sittingbourne (McNee 2002). The decoration of the vessel has several parallels amongst the globular urns at Thorny Down, Wiltshire. At the latter site decoration on such vessels again appears in bands, usually just above the widest part of the vessel, and includes shallow tooling, curvilinear design, and 'shallow punch markings' (Stone 1941, 126). Interestingly the globular urns at this site were discovered in features designated as 'cooking holes'; this suggests the possibility that the small amounts of soot on the Sandway Road vessel may indicate use in a cooking or heating process.

A small perforated applied lug in the Sandway Road assemblage (Fig. 1, No. 2) was in the well-processed quartzite fabric (Z2). The orientation was uncertain, but it may have been vertical, and is likely to have originated from a Deverel-Rimbury globular jar. Parallels may again be drawn with the material from Thorny Down (Stone 1941, fig. 2, fig. 3.1).

#### 5 DISCUSSION

The later prehistoric pottery assemblage from Sandway Road derived almost entirely from ditch 357703. The fabrics, form and decoration indicated a middle Bronze Age date for the ditch. The fine to intermediate ware fabrics F1, Z1 and Z2 were the most commonly occurring in the assemblage, and there was nothing to suggest that the inclusions identified in the fabrics were not available locally. The presence of both flint and quartzite fabrics raises a number of questions. It may be that one type of pottery was being brought in from elsewhere, or that two different geological sources were being exploited. Quartzite is a much harder material to crush than flint, and if both forms of temper were available locally, the reasons for using the harder material are suggestive of social rather than technical factors. Recent work on the inclusions present in prehistoric pottery suggests 'that the choice of inclusion/temper type and complexity of the recipe were not just determined by technical properties or local availability' (Hill 2002, 77).

The presence of two different globular jars at Sandway Road is of national importance because of the scarcity of such vessels within the Kent region.

### 6 CATALOGUE OF ILLUSTRATED SHERDS

Figure 1

1. Globular jar with burnished surfaces and three bands of decoration. Form: R1. Fabric: F1. PRN 1010, context 357704, ditch 357703.

2. Perforated applied lug from globular jar. Form: H1. Fabric: Z2. PRN 1009, context 357704, ditch 357703.

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