

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

**The post-Roman pottery from Little Stock Farm,
Merham, Kent (ARC LSF 99)**

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1 INTRODUCTION

A total of 111 sherds (1009 g) of post-Roman pottery was recovered during three stages of fieldwork (two evaluations and one excavation) at Little Stock Farm (ARC LSF 98 / ARC PWC 98 / ARC LSF 99). Apart from one early Saxon sherd, the assemblage is entirely of medieval date, with a potential date range of mid 11th to mid 16th century. The overall condition of this material is poor to fair; many sherds are small and relatively heavily abraded (mean sherd weight overall 9.1 g).

2 METHODS OF ANALYSIS

The pottery was recorded using a project-specific Access database. Fabric types were defined following the Canterbury Archaeological Trust (CAT) type series for post-Roman pottery. A scheme-wide type series was created for rim, base and handle forms, and this was linked where possible to vessel forms whose definition followed nationally recommended nomenclature (MPRG 1998). Details of decoration, surface treatment, manufacture, use-wear and condition were also recorded. Quantification in all cases is by both number and weight of sherds; EVEs have not been considered appropriate for use with post-Roman assemblages.

3 DESCRIPTION OF ASSEMBLAGE

One early Saxon, one Late Saxon and 15 medieval fabrics were identified; totals by fabric type are given in Table 1. The medieval fabrics include early medieval (EM) medieval (M) and late medieval (LM) wares, all of which are local or regional wares with known or likely sources in Kent or East Sussex.

Table 1: Fabric totals

Fabric Code	Fabric Name	No. sherds	Weight (g)	Date range
ES1	Early Saxon Sandy Ware	1	50	450 – 650
LS100	Miscellaneous Late Saxon wares	1	13	850 - 1050
EM1	Canterbury Sandy Ware	2	2	1050 – 1225
EM2	Early Medieval Shelly Ware	14	55	1075 – 1225
EM.M5	Ashford-type (Potter's Corner) Shelly-Sandy Ware	28	299	1175 – 1300
EM28	Kentish Sandy Ware with shell and sparse grits	2	10	1175 – 1225
EM32	?East Sussex Flint & Shell-Tempered	17	102	1050 – 1225
EM33	?East Sussex Shell & Flint-Tempered Coarse Sandy Ware	2	12	1075 – 1225
EM34	?East Sussex Coarse Sandy Ware with sparse shell	1	4	1075 - 1250
EM100	Miscellaneous early medieval wares	2	2	1050 - 1225
M10	Wealden-type pink-buff sandy ware	3	10	1350 – 1550
M40A	Ashford/Wealden Sandy Ware with sparse chalk/shell	11	81	1175 – 1400
M40B	Ashford/Wealden Sandy Ware with very rare shell	12	88	1175 – 1400
LM1	Late medieval Tyler Hill Ware	5	104	1375 – 1550
LM2	Canterbury-type earthenware	1	1	1475 – 1550
LM4	Wealden Buff Sandy Ware	6	140	1450 – 1550

Fabric Code	Fabric Name	No. sherds	Weight (g)	Date range
LM32	Wealden Orange-Buff Sandy with reduced streaks	3	36	1475 - 1550
	TOTAL	111	1009	

The earliest post-Roman sherd from the site is a single decorated body sherd in a coarse, sandy fabric (ES1), dating to the early Saxon period, and recovered from pit 2437. Decoration comprises vertical tooled lines combined with vertical and horizontal rows of shallow impressed dots.

One base sherd in a chalk-tempered fabric has been identified as Late Saxon (LS100), although it cannot at this stage be attributed to a specific ware type (J. Cotter pers. comm.).

The most common medieval fabric types seen here are shelly-sandy (EM.M5) and sandy wares (M40A, M40B) comparable to the products of the 13th century Ashford Potter's Corner kiln (and probably also manufactured at other sites in the Ashford area). Evidence from other sites on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, such as North of Westenhanger Castle (ARC WGC 98) and Mersham (ARC MSH 98) indicates that both the Ashford-type sandy and shelly-sandy ware traditions may have their origins in the Late Saxon period. There is only one diagnostic vessel form (in EM.M5) present at Little Stock Farm – a jar which belongs to the developed, late 12th/13th century industry (evaluation, 3695TT). There are also jug handles (two strap and one rod) and one jug rim in M40A/M40B (unstratified; ditches 369606, 369713).

Other wares are present in much smaller quantities, with very few diagnostic sherds. Three sherds in the sandy/flint-tempered fabric EM32 from hearth 2421 probably belong to the same vessel, a jug or pitcher with rod handle and impressed decoration in the form of multiple impressed dots in horizontal rows. Other diagnostic pieces are all late medieval (late 15th to early 16th century): a jar rim in Wealden fabric LM32 (disturbance 369806), a jug rim with strap handle stump in Wealden fabric LM4 (quarry 2522), and a jug handle with ring-and-dot stamps in Tyler Hill ware (LM1) (unstratified).

4 PROVENANCE

The pottery derived from stratified feature fills (58 sherds), subsoil and topsoil layers (37 sherds), and colluvial deposits (4 sherds). A small group of ten sherds were recovered as 'artefact samples' during rapid investigation of unexcavated segments of features. Two sherds were unstratified. Only one context produced more than 10 sherds – subsoil layer 2544 (13 sherds).

5 CONCLUSIONS

This small assemblage from Little Stock Farm is broadly comparable with the similar-sized assemblage from Bower Road in terms of the range of fabrics present. The potential date range is quite wide (mid 11th to mid 16th century, with residual Saxon sherds), but the quantities of pottery involved suggest that activity on the site was at best sporadic throughout this timespan, with the greatest emphasis on the early medieval period (mid 11th to mid 13th century).

The various wares present indicate a range of sources of supply here. Canterbury-type wares are present amongst the early medieval wares, although the latter are dominated by products of the local Ashford industry. The rest of the early medieval group is made up of coarse shelly, sandy/flint-tempered and shelly/flint-tempered wares, almost certainly representing other local products. Medieval wares are all local Wealden types. In the late medieval period Canterbury-type and Tyler Hill wares reappear, alongside the more local Wealden wares.

No conclusions have been drawn as to the nature and/or status of any activity on or close to the site, due to the small size of the assemblage.

6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

MPRG 1998 *A Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms*, Medieval Pottery Research Group Occas. Paper 1