

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

**The medieval pottery from Saltwood Tunnel,
Saltwood, Kent (ARC SLT 98)**

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1 INTRODUCTION

A total of 433 sherds (4514 g) of pottery of late Saxon date and later was recovered from four stages of fieldwork at Saltwood Tunnel (CAT excavations: ARC SLT98, ARC SLT98C and ARC SLT99; WA excavation: ARC SFB99). The assemblage ranges in date from late Saxon to post-medieval, with the majority of the assemblage falling within an early medieval date range.

2 METHODS OF ANALYSIS

The pottery was recorded using a project-specific Access database. Fabric types were defined, using a x20 binocular microscope, 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.

This report draws on recorded data and a report prepared by John Cotter (CAT) as part of the assessment phase (URS 2002).

3 DESCRIPTION OF ASSEMBLAGE

One late Saxon (LS), 10 early medieval (EM), five medieval (M), three late medieval (LM) and one post-medieval fabric were identified (early and middle Saxon vessels have been reported on separately for this site). Late post-medieval fabrics (LPM) have been grouped together for the purposes of recording, although details of specific fabric types can be found in the archive records. Totals by fabric type are given in **Table 1**. Prior to the post-medieval period, most of the fabrics are local or regional wares with known or likely sources in Kent or East Sussex, but there is one early medieval continental import.

Table 1: Fabric totals

Fabric Code	Fabric Name	No. sherds	Weight (g)	Date range
LS1	Canterbury -type Late Saxon sandy ware	8	54	850 - 1050
EM1	Canterbury sandy ware	219	2606	1050 – 1225
EM2	Early Medieval shelly ware	36	326	1075 – 1225
EM29	Kentish sandy ware with flint and sparse shell	6	40	1125 – 1225
EM30	Non-local coarse sand and shell-tempered ware	9	84	1050 – 1200
EM32	?E Sussex flint and shell-tempered ware	9	54	1050 – 1225
EM33	?E Sussex shell + flint tempered coarse sandy ware	3	82	1075 – 1225
EM41	Non-local moderate quartz with shell and flint temper	1	1	1050 – 1225
EM45	Non-local coarse sandy ware	11	82	1050 – 1400

Fabric Code	Fabric Name	No. sherds	Weight (g)	Date range
EM100	Miscellaneous early medieval wares	3	20	1050 – 1225
EM.M5	Ashford-type (Potter's Corner) shelly-sandy ware	5	23	1125 – 1250
M1	Medieval Tyler Hill ware	10	80	1225 – 1375
M37	?Medway chalk-tempered sandy ware	11	53	1225 – 1400
M40B	Ashford/Wealden sandy ware with very rare shell	9	59	1175 – 1400
M40C	Ashford/Wealden fine ware with chalk, shell and flint	1	14	1250 – 1450
M100	Miscellaneous unidentified medieval wares	3	27	1200 – 1400
LM1	Late medieval Tyler Hill ware	4	13	1375 – 1550
LM2	Canterbury-type earthenware	2	6	1475 – 1550
LM32	Wealden orange-buff sandy with reduced streaks	9	181	1475 – 1550
PM40B	Chinese porcelain 'Famille Rose'	1	6	1725 – 1800
LPM0	Miscellaneous late post-medieval wares	73	703	1775 +
	TOTAL	433	4514	

The condition of the assemblage ranges from poor to fair; the majority of sherds are at least moderately abraded, and shell inclusions have been leached out. Mean sherd weight (excluding post-medieval sherds) is 10.4 g.

Eight sherds, from three separate contexts, were identified as late Saxon sandy ware (LS1), including one everted rim and three sherds with combed decoration. In addition, 26 sherds in coarse shelly fabrics could be assigned either to LS2 (late Saxon shelly ware) or EM2 (early Medieval shelly ware) – they have all been quantified here as EM2, but include two rounded jars with simple everted rims which could be of late Saxon date (Fig. 1, Nos 1, 2). Both fabrics are clearly closely related to the early medieval Ashford-type wares and, as at Mersham, appear to represent an earlier phase of this industry, as does the sandy ware EM45, previously only recognised as a rare occurrence in Canterbury. However, neither these shelly and sandy wares nor the early medieval Ashford-type wares (EM.M5) occur at Saltwood in any significant quantity, and it is apparent that this source was not a major supplier to the site.

Amongst the early medieval assemblage, Canterbury-type sandy ware (EM1) is predominant (78.5% of the total by weight), indicating that the primary source of supply to the site from *c* 1050 was Canterbury. Vessel forms seen at Saltwood are mainly jars (15 positively identified examples) with undeveloped rim forms – plain everted, slightly beaded or thickened (Fig. 1, Nos 6, 7) – although there are a few examples of more developed triangular or squared rim profiles. This suggests that few of these vessels are likely to be later than the 12th century in date. Measurable rims range from 180 mm to 320 mm in diameter. Also present are five dishes, with diameters between 300 mm and 360 mm, all with knife-trimmed exterior surfaces, with internally bevelled, externally thickened or squared rims (Fig. 1, Nos 3, 4)

Other early medieval wares are represented only by small numbers of sherds. Most of these contain shell and/or flint inclusions. These wares have a broad date range of 11th to 13th century, and were probably produced at a number of different locations along the south

coast of Kent and Sussex. Some appear to be 'hybrid' types, with characteristics of two or more fabrics, suggesting that these fabrics are closely related. There are three jar rims, in fabrics EM29, EM30 and EM33 respectively, all undeveloped forms (Fig. 1, No. 5).

Only small quantities of later wares were recovered from the site, and it is clear that the intensity of activity on the site fell sharply after the 12th century. The wares that are present show a split between Canterbury wares (M1, LM1, LM2) and Ashford/Wealden wares (M40B, M40C, LM32) – this split is more even than in the early medieval period, although only very small quantities are involved. Diagnostic sherds derive mainly from jugs, including one handle with stabbed and stamped decoration. There is also one squared jar rim in fabric M40B.

A handful of sherds in a chalk-tempered ware have been recorded within the Canterbury fabric type series as ?Medway chalk-tempered sandy ware (M37), a 13th/14th century type, although such a source and date seems unlikely for these sherds, which occur almost exclusively alongside early medieval wares. There are no diagnostic sherds.

4 DISTRIBUTION

The pottery came mostly from ditches/gullies, pits and post holes which were concentrated in the western part of the site (ARC SLT 98 and ARC SLT 99: 394 sherds). Little pottery was recovered from the eastern part (ARC SFB 99: 40 sherds), where it was largely restricted to a small area. Within this distribution, pottery occurred in small quantities in a number of features; no single context produced more than 19 sherds (excluding the modern pottery). Twenty-four sherds came from grave fills amongst the Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, where they were presumably intrusive finds. There is no reason to postulate anything other than the deposition of standard domestic refuse here – there are no complete or partially complete vessels. The condition of the material suggests that much if not all of the pottery represents secondary refuse, probably redeposited from midden deposits.

There is little which can be gleaned from such a sparse distribution, but it is worth pointing out that all of the sherds of late Saxon sandy ware (LS1), and of the late Saxon or early medieval shelly wares (LS2/EM2) came from the eastern concentration. There are only five sherds in other fabrics – one sherd each of Canterbury-type sandy ware (EM1) and Canterbury-type earthenware (LM2, from a modern feature), and three sherds of medieval Tyler Hill ware (M1). This suggests an early, and probably short-lived focus of activity in this part of the site, later shifting westwards.

5 CONCLUSIONS

This small assemblage from Saltwood is the most easterly recovered from the CTRL route. Other CTRL sites to the west, such as Westenhanger, Bower Road, Little Stock Farm and

Mersham, yielded assemblages which provide comparable material, but also some interesting contrasts in terms of the range of fabrics and forms.

Saltwood shows a heavier reliance on pottery supply from Canterbury, with the Ashford area only supplying a minor component of the assemblage – in contrast Westenhanger, the nearest site to the west, although still dominated by Canterbury-type wares, has a higher relative proportion of Ashford-type wares. The two centres are roughly equidistant from Saltwood, but the marketing distribution of their respective products is not yet fully understood. Chronological factors may play a part here – at Westenhanger, the Ashford-type vessels belong to the developed industry of the later 12th and early 13th century (Grove and Warhurst 1952), while undeveloped forms occur largely in the Canterbury-type wares. In other words, an early monopoly of the market by Canterbury faced competition from Ashford from the later 12th century. The same pattern is not seen at Saltwood, perhaps because the majority of the assemblage, as suggested by the vessel forms, can be dated prior to the end of the 12th century.

Evidence for a late Saxon/early medieval precursor to the Ashford industry can, however, be observed at Saltwood in the form of earlier shelly wares (LS2/EM2), also seen at Mersham.

Interestingly, the group of minor wares containing combinations of sandy, shell and/or flint inclusions, which have a largely coastal distribution in south Kent and Sussex, are not well represented at Saltwood, although they form a significant part of the early medieval assemblage at Westenhanger. This is unlikely to have a purely chronological explanation, as fabric EM32 is closely associated with Canterbury-type sandy ware at the latter site.

As for the economic status of the site, the paucity of glazed wares can be noted (these are confined to medieval and later wares), alongside the unremittingly utilitarian nature of the early medieval assemblage. One point, however, warrants comment, and that concerns the number of dishes seen on the site. The numbers involved are very small (five identifiable dishes and 20 jars within the early medieval assemblage), but the relative proportion is high – open forms are rare or completely absent on most other sites on the CTRL route. Open forms, when found in any quantity, are usually considered to be associated with dairying practices.

6 CATALOGUE OF ILLUSTRATED VESSELS

Figure 1

1. Jar rim, fabric LS2/EM2, PRN (Pottery Record Number) AE-1743, ARC SFB99, context 3286.
2. Jar rim, fabric LS2/EM2, PRN AE-1751, ARC SFB99, context 1404.
3. Dish profile, fabric EM1, PRN AE-1573, ARC SLT98, context 34.
4. Dish profile, fabric EM1, PRN AE-1565, ARC SLT98, context 278.
5. Jar rim, fabric EM33, PRN AE-1605, ARC SLT98, context 324.
6. Jar rim, fabric EM1, PRN AE-1645, ARC SLT98, context 602.
7. Jar rim, fabric EM1, PRN AE-1657, ARC SLT98, context 549.
8. Jar rim, ?Normandy Gritty ware, PRN AE-1742, ARC SFB99, context 3571

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