

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

**The post-Roman pottery from Tollgate, Cobham,
Kent (ARC TLG 98)**

by Lorraine Mephram

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

| | | |
|----------|--|----------|
| 1 | INTRODUCTION | 3 |
| 2 | METHODS OF ANALYSIS | 3 |
| 3 | DESCRIPTION OF ASSEMBLAGE | 3 |
| 4 | DISTRIBUTION AND CHRONOLOGY | 4 |
| 5 | CONCLUSIONS | 5 |
| 6 | ILLUSTRATED VESSEL | 5 |
| 7 | BIBLIOGRAPHY | 5 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Table 1: Fabric totals | 3 |
|------------------------------|---|

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|--|--|
| Figure 1: Tollgate - Medieval pottery, 1 | |
|--|--|

1 INTRODUCTION

A total of 113 sherds (771 g) of post-Roman pottery was recovered from Tollgate (MoLAS excavation ARC CRS 98; MoLAS watching brief ARC 330 98 [Zone 4]). The assemblage ranges in date from early medieval to post-medieval.

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 Lyn Blackmore (MoLSS) as part of the assessment phase (URS 2001).

3 DESCRIPTION OF ASSEMBLAGE

Thirteen fabric types were identified: six early medieval (EM), three medieval (M), one late medieval (LM), and three late post-medieval (LPM). Quantification by fabric type is given in Table *1. All of the medieval wares are local or regional types with known or likely sources in north-west Kent and the London area.

The condition of the assemblage is generally fair, although some sherds are relatively heavily abraded, notably those from hearth 419. Mean sherd weight overall (excluding the late post-medieval wares) is 7.0 g.

Table 1: Fabric totals

| Fabric Code | Fabric Name | No. sherds | Weight (g) | Date range |
|-------------|--|------------|------------|------------|
| EM.M5 | Ashford-type (Potter's Corner) shelly-sandy ware | 1 | 16 | 1125-1250 |
| EM31 | ?Kentish Coarse sandy ware with moderate shell | 2 | 10 | 1100-1200 |
| EM35 | NW Kent shell-tempered ware | 72 | 392 | 1050-1225 |
| EM36 | NW Kent sandy and shell-tempered ware | 5 | 142 | 1100-1250 |
| EM48 | ?NW Kent shell-filled fine sandy ware | 14 | 80 | 1050-1250 |
| EM100 | Misc. early medieval wares | 1 | 19 | 1050-1225 |
| M5 | Fine London-type ware | 1 | 9 | 1080-1350 |
| M38A | NW Kent sandy ware (mainly reduced) | 9 | 75 | 1175-1350 |
| M41 | Coarse Border ware | 1 | 2 | 1340-1500 |
| LM1 | Late medieval Tyler Hill ware | 1 | 4 | 1375-1550 |
| LPM4 | Sunderland-type slipware | 1 | 12 | 1800-1900 |
| LPM18A | Black Basalt ware | 4 | 7 | 1770-1900 |

| Fabric Code | Fabric Name | No. sherds | Weight (g) | Date range |
|-------------|---------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| LPM43A | Creamware – Whieldon type | 1 | 3 | 1750-1780 |
| | TOTAL | 113 | 771 | |

Most common amongst the early medieval assemblage are shelly and shelly-sandy wares almost certainly locally produced in the north-west Kent area (EM35, EM36 and EM48). Vessel forms present here are exclusively jars with flared necks and simple, slightly beaded, thickened or externally expanded and flattened rims. Parallels can be found, for example, within assemblages from Rochester (Tester 1968; 1970; 1972), where shelly wares appear from around the mid 11th century, continuing into the 13th century and perhaps until the early 14th century. Given the predominance of the local wares, the presence of a single sherd of Ashford-type (Potter's Corner) shelly-sandy ware (EM.M5) is interesting.

One jar in a local shelly-sandy ware (EM36) has a short, everted rim, slightly thickened (Fig. 1, No. 1), similar in form to Late Saxon shelly wares from London, although wheel-thrown (see Vince and Jenner 1991, figs 2.23).

Medieval and later medieval wares show a sharp decline in quantities, indicating only sporadic activity on the site after the 12th century. The wares that are present, however, show a widening of the range of sources supplying the site at this period – one sherd of London-type ware, one of Coarse Border ware, and one of late medieval Tyler Hill ware - although the north-west Kent sandy wares are still in evidence (M38A).

4 DISTRIBUTION AND CHRONOLOGY

Medieval pottery came from one modern context (ARC CRS 24) and from ten features excavated during the watching brief (ARC 330 98). Within the latter area, two main foci of medieval activity, Church Road, Singlewell and Henhurst Road, were identified.

At Church Road, two pits (463 and 1211) and a boundary ditch (806) produced medieval pottery (a total of 53 sherds). Pit 463 and ditch 806 contained only early medieval local shelly wares (EM35, EM36), including one jar rim. These small groups are impossible to date closely, and the original spot date of late 11th to early 13th century cannot be refined. Pit 1211, as well as early medieval wares (EM35, EM48), contained five sherds of medieval reduced sandy ware (M38A), including a jug rim, suggesting a date range of late 12th to early 13th century.

Features at Henhurst Road include boundary ditch 1046 (1 sherd, medieval reduced sandy ware M38A) and hearth 419 (14 sherds, all local early medieval shelly ware, EM35, including two jar rims). The date range for these features is likely to be broadly contemporary with those at Church Road.

The later medieval regional wares (London-type ware, Coarse Border ware, Tyler Hill ware) all occurred as unstratified finds during the watching brief.

5 CONCLUSIONS

This small assemblage can be added to that from Northumberland Bottom (ARC WNB 98) to give a 'snapshot' of the early medieval ceramic sequence for north Kent. Shelly wares, probably of local manufacture, dominate the assemblage here, as they do on other sites in north Kent, such as Rochester, Dartford and Eynsford Castle, but the small number of diagnostic sherds here does not allow for particularly close dating. It would seem that the focus of activity across the site, however, can be dated between the late 11th and the late 12th or early 13th century and is unlikely, from the almost complete absence of glazed wares, to be associated with high status settlement.

The appearance of regional wares from London, the Surrey/Hampshire border and Canterbury later in the medieval period is interesting but not entirely unexpected. As unstratified finds, however, these few sherds can add little to an understanding of the site at this period.

6 ILLUSTRATED VESSEL

Figure 1

1. Jar rim, fabric EM100. Context 162, pit 163.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

ADS, 2006 CTRL digital archive, Archaeology Data Service,
<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/projArch/ctrl>

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

Tester, P J, 1968 Medieval [pottery], in Harrison, A C, and Flight, C, The Roman and medieval defences of Rochester in the light of recent excavations, *Archaeol Cantiana* **83**, 94-9

Tester, P J, 1970 Medieval pottery, in Harrison, A C, Excavations in Rochester, *Archaeol Cantiana* **85**, 108-9

Tester, P J, 1972 Medieval [pottery], in Harrison, A C, Rochester East Gate, 1969, *Archaeol Cantiana* **87**, 142-50

URS, 2001 CTRL Area 330 (Zone 4) Tollgate (ARC TLG98): Archaeological post-excavation assessment report, unpubl. report prepared by MoLAS for Union Railways (South) Limited, in ADS 2006

Vince, A G, and Jenner, A, 1991 The Saxon and early medieval pottery of London, in Vince, A G, *Aspects of Saxon and Norman London 2: Finds and Environmental Evidence*, London Middlesex Archaeol Soc Special Paper **12**, 19-119