

Assessment of pottery from the Nailsea to St George Transco Pipeline (NSG01)

Alan Vince and Kate Steane

Summary - Alan Vince

Finds from the line of the Nailsea to St George Transco pipeline indicate one, possibly two Romano-British sites and three medieval sites, each ranging in date from the 11th/12th century to the 17th century or later. The remaining finds are probably the result of dumping of night soil or farmyard manure on agricultural fields, from the Romano-British period onwards.

Description

The Pottery

Roman Pottery - Alan Vince

Sixty-one sherds of Romano-British pottery were present. They came from six plots. The wares present include greywares probably produced at Congresbury and Dorset BB1. The material should be submitted to a specialist in the Romano-British pottery of this area for an archive catalogue. One collection, from 5/51, is sufficiently large to suggest some sort of occupation or other activity whereas the remainder are probably to be explained as manuring scatters. All are small abraded sherds and have clearly been in the ploughzone for some time. It is possible, therefore, that the archaeological deposits in which they were once present have been completely ploughed out.

Trench:	RPOT	RPOT?	Grand Total
5/48	11		11
5/51	41	1	42
5/52	2		2
5/56	3		3
6/66	2		2
6/68	1		1
Grand Total	60	1	61

Medieval Pottery - Alan Vince

There is no pottery known from this region dating between the 5th and the 7th centuries, with the exception of Mediterranean imports from the sub-Roman re-occupation of the Cadbury-Congresbury hill fort. The lack of pottery of this period is therefore no guide to the presence/absence of occupation of this period on the pipeline route.

The earliest pottery that might be expected would date to the later Anglo-Saxon pottery, such as the Cheddar E ware which was present in late 10th/early 11th-century contexts at Cheddar Palace. No examples of this ware, or any similar late Anglo-Saxon wares, were present in the collection.

Excavations in Bristol and Cheddar have shown that pottery was being produced at a number of centres in the region before the Norman conquest and it is likely that this is the first period to be represented in the pipeline collection. Three wares were identified:

Bristol C ware (BRISTOLC) contains Carboniferous limestone fragments and some fragments of chert, also of Carboniferous age. Potential sources exist to the north and south of the Bristol Avon.

Bath A ware (BATHA) contains water-polished rounded quartz grains originating in the lower Greensand together with angular flint fragments and a micaceous, silty groundmass. It was probably produced in central Wiltshire and is a common find on sites in the Bristol Avon valley.

Southwestern Chert-tempered ware (SWCHT) also contains water-polished Greensand quartz grains, but with equal quantities of angular Greensand chert. The ware was produced in south Somerset, probably in the predecessor to the late and post-medieval south Somerset pottery industry centred at Donyatt.

None of these three wares is limited to the pre-conquest period, and the latter two wares were still in use in the earlier part of the 13th century. A total of 21 sherds of these three wares was recovered, with only one possible concentration, 5/51.

Trench:	BATHA	BRISTOLC	SWCHT	Grand Total
5/48	4			4
5/51	6		1	7
6/64	1			1
6/68	1		1	2
7/69			1	1
7/70	2			2
8/76			4	4
Grand Total	14	3	4	21

The majority of the medieval pottery is of later 12th to 15th centuries. Within this long period it is possible to distinguish pottery of 12th/mid 13th century date and later 13th to 15th century date although there is likely to have been a long overlap.

One hundred and forty-three sherds were datable to the 12th to mid 13th centuries. The majority of these were from handmade vessels tempered with a quartzose sand containing abundant lower Carboniferous sandstone fragments (LCSST). Alongside these were sherds of Ham Green glazed ware (HG), Ham Green coarseware (HG), Minety ware (MINETY) and Worcester glazed ware (WORCS). Some of the Minety ware sherds might be of later medieval date, but the main period of importation of this ware to Bristol (from where undoubtedly it travelled to these sites) was the later 12th and 13th centuries. The three featured sherds - two jar rims and a jug or tripod pitcher sherd with horizontal combing - are all of this date. There is a concentration of finds in plot 5/51 but also significant quantities from 5/48 and 6/68.

Trench:	HG	LCSST	LCSST GLAZED	MINETY	WORCS	Grand Total
5/47	1	2				3
5/48	2	16		1		19
5/50		2		1		3
5/51	3	67		2	3	76
5/52		3				3
6/61		1				1
6/63		1				1
6/64		1				1
6/66	2	1				3
6/68		11		1	2	14
7/69		5			1	6
7/70		7				7
7/71		1				1

8/76		5				5
Grand Total	8	123	3	8	1	143

The later medieval sherds are mainly of Bristol Redcliffe ware (BR) with smaller quantities of Malvern Chase glazed ware (HERB4), Laverstock glazed ware (LAVERSTOCK) and South Somerset medieval glazed ware (SSOM MED). As with the earlier finds, plot 5/51, followed by plots 5/48 and 6/68 form the only significant concentrations. A comparison of the distribution of finds from these two periods shows no evidence for a shift in settlement or other activity between the two.

Trench:	BR	HERB4	LAVERSTOCK	SSOM MED	Grand Total
5/47	1			2	3
5/48	9	4		2	15
5/51	17		1	6	24
5/52	1				1
5/56	2				2
6/61	1				1
6/63	1				1
6/66	1				1
6/68	6	3		4	13
7/69	2				2
7/70	1			1	2
7/72	1				1
8/81	1				1
Grand Total	44	7	1	15	67

Post-Medieval Pottery - Alan Vince

Two hundred and ninety six sherds of pottery dating between the 16th and the mid 18th centuries were recovered.

These sherds can be divided roughly into an earlier and a later group. The earlier group includes black-glazed Cistercian wares (CSTN), Frechen stoneware (FREC), Malvern Chase 'pink' ware (HERB5), Merida-type ware (SPAM) and South Somerset ware (SSOM). The latter ware also continued to be used into the later period. Concentrations of earlier post-medieval pottery were found at 5/48, 5/51, 6/66, 6/67, 6/68 and 7/70. Of these, 5/48 and 5/51 produced the most definite sherds of 16th/early 17th-century date, suggesting a continuation of the activity found at those sites in the medieval period.

Trench:	CSTN	FREC	HERB5	SPAM	SSOM	Grand Total
1/2					1	1
1/5					2	2
1/6					1	1
5/47					1	1
5/48		3			1	59
5/50					4	4
5/51		8	1	10		64
5/56					3	3
6/61					1	1

6/63					2	2
6/64					2	2
6/65					1	1
6/66	1	1			27	29
6/67		1			11	12
6/68	1				18	19
7/69			1		5	6
7/70					16	16
7/71					1	1
7/72					1	1
8/77					1	1
8/78		1			1	2
8/80					1	1
Grand Total	13	4	11	1	200	229

Ninety-seven sherds of later post-medieval pottery were found. They included North Devon gravel-tempered ware (NDGT), which although produced from the later 16th century onwards was not common on sites in the Bristol channel until the later 17th century, Nottingham stoneware (NOTS), which continued in use into the early modern period, but which was first produced in the later 17th century; Staffordshire/Bristol slipwares (press-moulded vessels - STCO, wheelthrown, black-glazed coarsewares - STCOAR, mottled-glazed wares - STMO, sliptrailed wheelthrown wares - STSL); White English salt-glazed stoneware of mid 18th century date (SWSG), tin-glazed ware (TGW) of 17th/mid 18th-century date and Westerwald stoneware (WEST), of later 17th to mid 18th century date. Only one concentration of finds was discovered, at site 5/51.

Trench:	NDGT	NOTS	STCO	STCOA R	STMO	STSL	SWSG	TGW	WEST	Grand Total
5/48	2	1				1				4
5/50		1	2							3
5/51		2	4	1	1	14	1	1	2	26
5/56	1	1								2
6/64	1		1		1	3			1	7
6/65	1	1			1					3
6/66						2	1		1	4
6/67			1			1				2
6/68						4				4
7/69						2	1			3
7/70	2		1			3				6
7/72					1					1
8/77	1									1
8/80						1				1
Grand Total	8	6	9	1	4	31	3	1	4	67

Early Modern Pottery - Kate Steane

There were 193 sherds (1050g) of early modern pottery of which 80 sherds (278g) were transfer printed ware. The low status domestic bias of the assemblage was also supported by the amount of cream ware (40 sherds; 122g), pearl ware (19 sherds 71g) and white ware (19 sherds 148g) and the small quantity of porcelain (4 sherds of English porcelain and one sherd of Chinese porcelain). Many of these sherds were from plates and a few from cups and they were mostly spread over pipeline sections 1, 5, 6 and 7; a piece of red basalt ware represented the remains of a teapot and there was a sherd of refined redware. Twenty two sherds from late 18th/19th century red earthen ware (MISC NKW) and three sherds of 19th century buff ware indicate kitchen breakage; one of the buff ware sherds was from a colander. Additionally there was a sherd from a Staffordshire coarse pancheon and one from a Sunderland bowl; the kitchenware mostly came from either section 5 or 6. There were a few stonewares suggesting limited alcohol consumption (2 sherds of London stoneware, 4 sherds of Bristol stoneware, 3 sherds of Derbyshire stoneware and 6 sherds of Nottingham stoneware); again these sherds came just from pipeline sections 5 and 6. Ceramic supplies every human need and this assemblage contained eight sherds of English stoneware, two possibly from a toilet and the others from drains; these came from sections 1, 5, 6 and 7.

The assemblage suggests manuring sourced from one or more local farmhouses. The lack of kitchenware and stoneware vessels in sections 1 and 7 may indicate that the fields in these pipeline sections were fallow for a period.

Building Material

Burnt/Fired clay - Alan Vince

Only one piece of burnt/fired clay was recovered. This was a probable daub fragment from plot 5/51. This plot also produced a collection of Romano-British pottery and it is likely that the daub is of this date.

Post-medieval ceramic building material - Alan Vince

Twenty-nine fragments of ceramic building material are of types which occur in the post-medieval period, although most continued in use into the early modern period. There was in addition thirteen fragments of post-medieval ceramic building material from the pipeline. Eleven of these fragments are of pantiles, which are unlikely to be earlier than the later 17th century in this area. A further eight pantile fragments could be either of post-medieval or early modern date.

Modern ceramic building material - Alan Vince

Nineteen fragments of modern ceramic building material were found. These include air bricks, plain bricks, land drain fragments, a nibbed pantile and wall tiles. There were two concentrations of ceramic building material, from plots 5/48 and 5/51.

Other building materials - Alan Vince

Single fragments of asbestos sheeting, concrete, mortar and plaster were recovered. All are of modern date.

Window glass - Kate Steane

There were three pieces of late 16th to 17th century glass from pipeline sections 5 and 6. Seven modern glass fragments came from pipeline sections 1, 5, 6 and 7; one had putty remaining along one edge.

Glassware - Kate Steane

There was a variety of glassware - the earliest represented by pharmaceutical phials dating between the late 17th and 18th centuries (2 fragments from section 6). There were a number of other blown vessels, all tall bottles dating between the late 17th and early 19th centuries; they were from pipeline sections 1, 5, 6 and 7 (15 fragments). Moulded bottles made up most of the 19th and 20th century glassware (24 pieces from sections 5, 6 and 7); a few of the bottles carried raised lettering including one for chicory.

Other modern glassware consisted of two decorative dishes, one paste jar and another jar of unknown purpose, an elegant translucent white stopper and a white figurine.

Glass production waste - Kate Steane

There were 10 pieces of glass production waste (286g), all from pipeline sections 1 and 6. Of these 9 pieces were of dark green glass waste and 1 of light green.

Industrial waste - Kate Steane

There were 56 fragments of industrial waste (1,508g), all pieces of non-ferrous slag and these were found in pipeline sections 1, 5, 6 and 7.

Clay Tobacco Pipes - Kate Steane

There were 53 fragments weighing 126gms of those were 7 fragments of bowl - two 17th century and three 18th/19th century. Of the stems dated by their broad diameters there are 11 17th century ones and 33 of 18th/19th century date. The majority of the pipe fragments (23 out of 53) came from pipeline sections 5 (17th as well as 18th/19th century pieces) and the rest came from sections 6 and 8.

Animal Bone - Kate Steane

There were 22 fragments of animal bone weighing 225gm recovered. It is unlikely that they are earlier than the early modern period

Iron Objects

Fifty-two fragments of iron were recovered. Many of these are of types which are certainly of modern date, such as barbed wire, cast iron drain pipe fragments or penknives. Others are of undatable, long-lived types, such as binding strips or nails. This left eight objects which might on further study be more closely dated. They include a horseshoe (1/7), a billhook (5/51), an unidentified tool (5/51) and unidentified objects (5/48, 6/66, 6/68 and 7/69).

Copper Alloy

A fragment of a cast copper alloy vessel, probably a cauldron, was found in plot 6/68 (9036). The vessel is likely to be of late medieval date (ie at the outside limits late 13th to 16th centuries, but most likely later 14th or 15th century).

Recommendations - Alan Vince

Plot 5/51 produced sufficient finds of medieval and post-medieval date to suggest that it was the site of a long-lived settlement of this period, probably originating during the 11th/12th centuries and continuing in use into the early modern period. There were also significant concentrations of medieval pottery from 5/48 and 6/68. The latter site also produced a fragment of a copper-alloy cauldron, suggesting a moderately high status. Two of these three sites also produced concentrations of Romano-British pottery, suggesting that they were favoured locations for settlement from the early first millennium onwards.