

Assessment of the Finds from the Groombridge to Lanton Green Water Main, near Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent (GRL 44)

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A small collection of finds was recovered from evaluation trenches dug in advance of the Groombridge to Lanton Green Water Main by Network Archaeology Ltd.

Two of the finds are prehistoric pot sherds, from trenches 14.01 and 22.02. The remaining finds are all of late 18th century or later date and include some finds which are definitely of later 19th-century and later date as well as some which might be earlier.

Description

Ceramic Building Material

Forty-six fragments of ceramic building material were recovered. They consist of 33 fragments of flat roof tile and 13t fragments of brick. The fabric was not examined in detail but apart from varying in firing temperature there does not appear to any great difference in fabric.

The flat roof tile includes two fragments with rectangular pegholes, one 9mm square and the other 9mm wide by an unknown length. Flat roof tiles of this type were first introduced to England in the 12th century but continued to be used in most parts of the country into the post-medieval period. The south-east is an area where their use seems to have continued until recent times with little competition either from slate (but see below under Stone) or pantiles.

The bricks include one (broken in two) with a frogged top, probably made by press-moulding, a feature which seems to have come into general use only in the mid 19th century. The other brick fragments are all probably hand moulded and could be of any age from the later medieval period to the 20th century. In all likelihood, they are of later 18th to 20th-century date.

Glass

Nine fragments of glass were recovered. All come from vessels.

Seven fragments come from free-blown bottles of the tall form which was introduced in the mid 18th century and continues to the present day. Four fragments come from the bases and two of these are remarkable for the height and nature of the base kick. These vessels have kicks of 55mm with pronounced flattening of the profile where the pontil has been applied.

The colour of the glass also distinguishes these two high-kicked vessels since they are notably lighter in colour than the others, some of which appear almost black until viewed in a strong light, when they can be seen to be a dark green.

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A single fragment of the rim of a moulded mineral water bottle made from a light blue glass is present. Traces of the pinched neck indicate that this was a Codd bottle of the type patented in 1872 and produced during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

A single fragment of a thin-walled opaque white vessel was recovered. Opaque white glass was produced in the 16th century in Venice and was produced in Bristol in the 18th century but it became common in the 19th century (Opaline glass). The fragment comes from a vessel with a large diameter such as a vase or bowl.

Manufacturing Waste

Two fragments of vesicular light green opaque glass slag were recovered. This material was used widely as hard core and road metalling in the 19th and 20th centuries. A single fragment of vesicular black slag is probably iron production waste.

Pottery

Prehistoric

Two sherds of probable prehistoric pottery were recovered.

One (context 22205) is highly abraded and comes from a thick-walled vessel. Inclusions visible at x20 magnification include clay pellets and carbonised wood. The vessel is oxidized. The texture of the fabric and the thickness of the body both suggest a Bronze Age date. However, the sherd should be submitted to a specialist in the prehistoric pottery of the southeast for confirmation of the identification.

The second sherd (context 14108) is quite fresh. It has a dark grey to black core and dark brown surfaces. At x20 magnification the fabric is seen to be tempered with abundant rounded quartz and angular flint sand, well-sorted and between 0.5mm and 1.0mm across. Similar flint-tempered fabrics occur in the Iron Age of Hampshire (Vince 2003) but are probably widespread in southern England. The sherd comes from a vessel with walls c.0.7mm thick and handmade vessels of similar character could be found in the late Saxon and early medieval periods. However, no similar fabrics are known to the author from either Sussex or Kent.

Post-medieval and Early Modern

Twenty-three sherds of late 18th-century and later date were found. Two of these were red earthenwares which might be of earlier date (brown-glazed earthenware – BERTH – and glazed red earthenware – GRE). The BERTH sherd is similar in appearance to the red borderware produced on the Surrey/Hampshire border but without detailed comparison with material from other southeastern sources no identification can be made.

A single sherd of white English saltglazed stoneware was recovered – SWSG. This type was produced in the early to mid 18th centuries (Edwards and Hampson 2005) and the dish form is probably datable between c.1730 and c.1760.

Wares which were introduced in the late 18th century were present. They consist of Creamware – CREA – and Pearlware – PEAR.

A single sherd of a buff ware vessel, produced in the early 19th century or later, was recovered (NCBW).

The remaining types cannot be closely dated: English porcelain – ENPO; unglazed red earthenwares – PMLOC and Transfer-printed wares - TPW.

Table 1

cname	BOWL	CUP	DISH	FLP	INSULATOR	JAR	PLATE	TPOT LID	VESSEL	Grand Total
BERTH						1				1
CREA	1						4			5
ENPO					1			1		2
GRE	1									1
NCBW	1									1
PEAR							3		1	4
PMLOC				3						3
SWSG			1							1
TPW		2					3			5
Grand Total	3	2	1	3		1	10	1	1	23

Stone

A single fragment of slate, probably from north Devon, but possibly from Brittany, was recovered. It was probably used as a roof slate.

Assessment

Trench 03.01

Four contexts in Trench 3.1 produced finds, none of which is necessarily earlier than the late 19th century in date. Those from brick structure 3106 date the structure to the later 19th century or later. The glass from pits 3014 and 3120 date the fills to the late 18th century or later. The single brick fragment from the topsoil cannot be closely dated.

Trench 04.01

Three finds were recovered from Trench 4.1. Two fragments of flat roof tile and a fragment of pottery were recovered from the topsoil, 4100. They are of types with long date ranges and might have been in use in the 19th century.

Trench 05.01

Sixteen finds were recovered from Trench 5.1. The fill of soakway 5104 (context 5103) produced three potsherds which give a deposition date of early 19th century or later. The subsoil, 5101, produced a fragment of glass slag and a flat roof tile, neither closely datable, and the topsoil produced pottery, glass slag, iron slag and glass which give a deposition date of later 19th century.

Trench 05.02

Two finds were recovered from Trench 5.2. Both come from the subsoil, 5201, and date its deposition to the late 18th century or later.

Trench 07.01

Four finds were recovered from Trench 7.1. They come from the topsoil, 7101, and date its deposition to the mid 18th century or later.

Trench 07.02

Seventeen finds were recovered from Trench 7.2. All come from the subsoil, 7201, and consist of flat roof tiles and bricks which cannot be closely dated.

Trench 08.01

Four finds were recovered from Trench 8.1. All come from the subsoil, 8101, and date its deposition to the late 18th century or later.

Trench 09.01

Two finds were recovered from Trench 9.1. Both come from the topsoil, 9100, and date its deposition to the late 16th century or later.

Trench 09.02

Five finds were recovered from Trench 9.2. All come from the topsoil, 9200, and date its deposition to the early 19th century or later.

Trench 14.01

A single potsherd was recovered from Trench 14.1, broken into two after or during excavation. The sherd is probably of Iron Age date and was recovered from the fill of plant hole 14107 (context 14108).

Trench 16.02

A single find was recovered from Trench 16.2. It came from the topsoil, 16200, and dates its deposition to the late 18th century or later.

Trench 19.01

A single find was recovered from Trench 19.1. It came from the topsoil, 19100, and cannot be closely dated (a fragment of flat roof tile).

Trench 22.01

Two finds were recovered from Trench 22.1. They came from the topsoil, 22100, and cannot be closely dated (fragments of flat roof tile).

Trench 22.02

Three finds were recovered from Trench 22.2. An abraded potsherd from the fill of ditch 22203 (context 22205) dates its fill to the Bronze Age or later.

Fragments of flat roof tile and slate from the topsoil, 22200, cannot be closely dated.

Trench 27.01

Eleven finds were recovered from Trench 27.1. They all come from topsoil, 27100, and date deposition to the early 19th century or later.

Trench 27.02

Six finds were recovered from Trench 27.2. They come from topsoil, 27200, and include a fragment of porcelain insulator which dates deposition to the later 19th century or later.

Retention

The finds from feature fills should be retained for potential re-examination and revision of identifications at some future date. The finds from the topsoil and subsoil could probably be discarded.

Further Work

The two potential prehistoric sherds should be submitted to a specialist in the prehistoric pottery of the southeast of England for confirmation of the identifications. None of the other finds require further work.

Bibliography

Edwards, Diana and Hampson, Rodney (2005) *White Salt-Glazed Stoneware of the British Isles*. Woodbridge, Antique Collectors' Club

Vince, Alan (2003) *Characterisation studies of Iron Age flint-tempered pottery in Hampshire*. AVAC Reports 2003/68 Lincoln, Alan Vince Archaeology Consultancy

Appendix 1

Context	class	Cname	Form	subfabric	Description	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	ASW	Condition	Use	L	B	TH
3100	CBM	PMTIL	BRICK			BS	1	1	84	84.00	FUEL ASH GLAZE; BRICKMAKING WASTE?				
3105	PMGL	PMGL	TALL	LTGR	BASE PUSHED UP TO 55	B	1	1	177	177.00					
3106	CBM	MOD	BRICK		FROGGED TOP	BS	2	1	2411	1205.50	OVERFIRED; VITRIFIED		233	109	65
3120	PMGL	PMGL	TALL	DKGR	BASE PUSHED UP TO 40	B	1	1	322	322.00					
3120	PMGL	PMGL	TALL	LTGR	BASE PUSHED UP TO 55	B	1	1	210	210.00					
4100	CBM	MTIL	FLAT			BS	1	1	11	11.00					11
4100	CBM	MTIL	FLAT			BS	1	1	31	31.00	HARDFIRED				10
4100	POTTERY	CREA	PLATE			BS	1	1	1	1.00					
5100	CBM	MTIL	FLAT			BS	1	1	13	13.00					12
5100	POTTERY	TPW	CUP			BS	1	1	1	1.00					
5100	SLAG	GLASS SLAG	GLASS SLAG			BS	1	1	1	1.00					
5100	PMGL	PMGL	TALL	LTGR		B	1	1	13	13.00					
5100	PMGL	PMGL	COD	LTBL		NECK	1	1	16	16.00					
5100	CBM	MTIL	FLAT			BS	1	1	21	21.00					11
5100	SLAG	IRON SLAG	IRON SLAG			BS	1	1	7	7.00					
5100	PMGL	PMGL	TALL	LTGR	BASE PUSHED UP TO 45	BS	1	1	32	32.00					
5100	POTTERY	GRE	BOWL			BS	1	1	35	35.00					

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5100	POTTERY	TPW	PLATE		BS	1	1	1	1.00		
5100	CBM	MTIL	FLAT		BS	1	1	49	49.00	HARDFIRED	10
5101	SLAG	GLASS SLAG	GLASS SLAG		BS	1	1	18	18.00		
5101	CBM	MTIL	FLAT	FRAG	BS	1	1	9	9.00	ABR	
5103	POTTERY	NCBW	BOWL		BS	1	1	3	3.00		
5103	POTTERY	PEAR	PLATE	PINK APPEARANCE	R	2	1	2	1.00		
5201	POTTERY	CREA	BOWL		BS	1	1	2	2.00		
5201	POTTERY	PEAR	PLATE	BLUE FEATHERED EDGE	R	1	1	3	3.00		
7101	POTTERY	SWSG	DISH		R	1	1	6	6.00		
7101	CBM	MTIL	FLAT		BS	2	1	162	81.00	FLAKING	12
7101	CBM	MTIL	FLAT		BS	1	1	15	15.00	SOIL DEP	11
7201	CBM	PMTIL	BRICK		BS	2	2	63	31.50		
7201	CBM	MTIL	FLAT		BS	1	1	60	60.00	HARDFIRED	11
7201	CBM	MTIL	FLAT	FLAKE	BS	1	1	4	4.00		
7201	CBM	PMTIL	BRICK		BS	2	2	92	46.00	ABR	
7201	CBM	PMTIL	BRICK		BS	1	1	70	70.00	ABR	
7201	CBM	PMTIL	BRICK		BS	1	1	211	211.00		
7201	CBM	PMTIL	BRICK		BS	1	1	58	58.00	SALT SURFACING	
7201	CBM	PMTIL	BRICK		BS	1	1	110	110.00	ABR	65
7201	CBM	MTIL	FLAT		BS	1	1	70	70.00		14
7201	CBM	MTIL	FLAT		BS	1	1	2	2.00		13
7201	CBM	MTIL	FLAT		BS	1	1	15	15.00		12
7201	CBM	MTIL	FLAT		BS	1	1	28	28.00	HARDFIRED	12
7201	CBM	MTIL	FLAT		BS	1	1	70	70.00	HARDFIRED	12

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7201	CBM	MTIL	FLAT		BS	1	1	66	66.00	FLAKING	12
7201	CBM	PMTIL	BRICK		BS	1	1	346	346.00		
8101	CBM	MTIL	FLAT		BS	1	1	33	33.00	HARDFIRED	11
8101	CBM	MTIL	FLAT	FLAKE	BS	1	1	5	5.00	ABR	
8101	CBM	PMTIL	BRICK		BS	1	1	23	23.00	ABR	
8101	POTTERY	CREA	PLATE		BS	1	1	4	4.00		
9100	POTTERY	BERTH	JAR		BS	1	1	6	6.00		
9100	CBM	MTIL	FLAT	SQUARE PEGHOLE 8 BY 8	BS	1	1	12	12.00		10
9200	CBM	MTIL	FLAT	FLAKE	BS	1	1	11	11.00	BLACKENED BASE	
9200	CBM	MTIL	FLAT		BS	1	1	30	30.00		11
9200	POTTERY	TPW	CUP		BS	1	1	1	1.00		
9200	POTTERY	CREA	PLATE		BS	1	1	1	1.00		
9200	PMGL	PMGL	VESSEL	WHITE	BS	1	1	1	1.00		
14108	POTTERY	IAFLINT?	JAR	QUARTZ FLINT SAND	BS	2	1	1	0.50		
16200	POTTERY	CREA	PLATE		BS	1	1	1	1.00		
19100	CBM	MTIL	FLAT	RECT/SQ PEGHOLE; ONE SIDE 9	BS	1	1	19	19.00	ABR; SOME BLACKENING BASE	11
22100	CBM	MTIL	FLAT		BS	1	1	7	7.00		11
22100	CBM	MTIL	FLAT		BS	1	1	37	37.00	ABR	11
22200	CBM	MTIL	FLAT	FLAKE	BS	1	1	10	10.00		
22200	STONE	STONE	ROOFSLATE	SLATE	BS	1	1	3	3.00		
22205	POTTERY	PREH	JAR		BS	1	1	4	4.00		
27100	POTTERY	ENPO	TPOT LID		R	1	1	4	4.00		
27100	POTTERY	TPW	PLATE	OVERGLAZE PAINTING	R;BS	2	1	9	4.50		

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27100	POTTERY	PMLOC	FLP		BS	2	2	19	9.50		
27100	POTTERY	PEAR	VESSEL	FLAKE	BS	1	1	1	1.00		
27100	CBM	MTIL	FLAT		BS	1	1	19	19.00	BLACKENED BOTH SIDES	12
27100	CBM	MTIL	FLAT	BLOB OF LEAD	BS	1	1	154	154.00	SOME BLACKENING	12
27100	CBM	MTIL	FLAT		BS	1	1	13	13.00		11
27100	PMGL	PMGL	TALL	DKGR	BS	2	2	20	10.00		
27200	CBM	MTIL	FLAT		BS	4	4	157	39.25		10- 11
27200	POTTERY	ENPO	INSULATOR		R	1	1	11	11.00		
27200	POTTERY	PMLOC	FLP		BS	1	1	25	25.00		